No. 56 Fall 1987 $5 (Canadian $6)

WHOLE EARTH REVIEW

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COVER: *Simple question, complex answer. Several months ago I asked a number of people how they played — what kind of toys and games were most attractive and why. I had some surprising responses, many of them printed here. Rob Serian jokes about dressing up in drag for fun, but his experience, as described in "Big Hair and New Makeup" on p. 2, is quite serious. He is pictured on the cover in his "other" version, Lola Berry, a photo taken by our own Don Ryan in what may be Whole Earth's first fashion show.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

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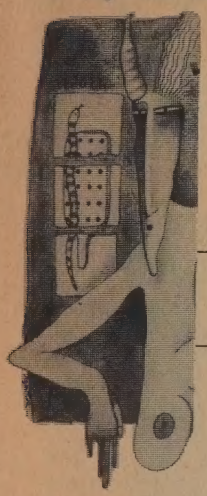

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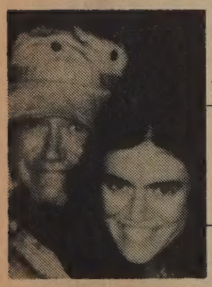

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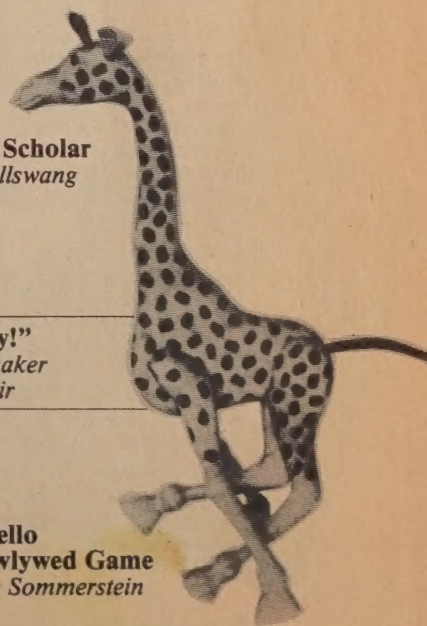


BIG HAIR AND NEW MAKEUP

BY ROBERT SERIAN

Dan Jones

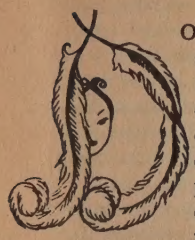
Two gay men are walking down the street. They see a beautiful woman. "Look at that gorgeous woman!" one man says to the other. "She's beautiful! She's so beautiful she makes me wish I was a lesbian."

No matter how tolerant, we all have a limit to our comfort. It's easy to embrace the gay community, as long as it remains a community, an idea, a symbol, or simply a friend. When it becomes a garishly made-up drag queen leaning on the bar beside us, squeamishness is right around the corner.

Robert Serian knows the power of appearance. The following story is all true and more than a little brave.
—Sallie Tisdale

LOLA BERRY. LOLA BERRY. The name kept going through my head. What would this character do for a living? How would she dress? Would she be married? Developing the character was an artistic process. I had to think as Lola thought when picking out clothes, makeup, wigs and accessories. Her behavior grew from the costuming. I decided Lola would most definitely be a divorcee. When she was married, she never changed her name. She added his with a hyphen: Lola Berry-Miller. Needless to say, Miller was dropped after the divorce. They had no children. Lola supported herself by working as a cocktail waitress. It could have been any cocktail lounge with a neon martini glass and olive flickering above the corner entrance. Lola would have a gravelly voice from smoking too many cigarettes. She would drink too many highballs and flirt with far too many men. She knew all the regulars by their first names and played Frank Sinatra's version of "High Hopes" on the juke box an average of five times a working shift. She would spend her tips on taxis, big hair and a lot of new makeup. Her best friend was Kitty Litter and together they would go out on Saturday nights and meet men. Every Saturday Lola would wear a new

dress, the shorter the better, 'cause Lola had a great pair of gams.



DOING DRAG started at a very early age. In fact, most of us do drag when we're children, but we call it dress-up. We put on our parents' clothes, pretending to be them, acting grown-up. We did it because it was fun. I just got more attention doing it.

When I was thirteen and fourteen my mother's clothes were as easily available as they were when I was younger. Yet a fourteen-year-old male can't put on his mother's clothes and parade around the house without getting too *much* attention from his parents. At that age, I believed I was already grown up, searching for my own identity. I no longer wanted to pretend to be my mother.

I began hiding in my bedroom, stripping the sheets off my bed, turning them into fashionable gowns. The pillowcases became simple turbans or extravagant headdresses. An extraordinary imagination is useful when you're working with such limited props. I began pretending I was Barbra Streisand, Liza Minelli or Bette Midler. I would stand in front of the mirror in my costume and lip-sync to their records. A hairbrush served as the microphone. Since I didn't have many friends, these fantasies were my close companions through high school.

Yet no matter how vivid an imagination I had, there was no conceivable way I could enjoy these fantasies to their fullest. There would always be disappointment pretending to be someone else and knowing you weren't.

I realized I was gay during this time. This added much excitement and confusion to my life — excitement because I was gay and I knew it was special and it was my secret, confusion because I was isolated with that secret. I lived in Selma, a small farming community in California, and the atmosphere was not conducive to a budding drag queen. I began to withdraw further into myself and had difficulty relating to my classmates. There was a feeling of superiority that went along with being gay. School and high marks came easily for me, but by the time I was sixteen I was attending classes less frequently. I would drive to San Francisco on the weekends. I began making friends there, establishing a new life for myself.

I moved to San Francisco in January 1980. I realize now that I was looking for that house with the white picket fence.

Living in San Francisco, I was exposed to the variety of the homosexual lifestyle. I spent much time with my close friends, going to the heavily populated gay districts — Polk and Turk Streets, Castro Street and the area known as South of Market. With friends, I would go to drag shows on Turk Street. The shows were amateur, the performers for the most part unskillful.

After a lot of coaxing from my close friends, I was persuaded to perform at one of the clubs. The first time I impersonated Angie Dickinson, lip syncing to Dionne Warwick's "Do You Know The Way To San Jose?," a song written by Angie's husband, Burt Bacharach. We thought it would be great fun, but the audience didn't understand the concept. A few months later I returned to the same club, this time impersonating Jackie Onassis. I lip synced a song called "I Want To Be Jackie Onassis" and the crowd loved it.

This was prior to the development of Lola Berry. It was fun, but I felt as though I was back in my bedroom in Selma pretending to be someone else.

I felt the tremendous need for a character of my own. I remember feeling anxious and fearful when my friend Dan suggested we put on drag and go out to the gay bars. I was an awkward, nameless character with no impersonation to hide behind. I changed names frequently that evening, realizing that with each name change a new personality emerged. I knew I wanted one name from which a character would grow.

Finding a name was an entertaining pursuit. While listening to the weather forecast, I heard "gale warnings," and thought "Gail Warnings." A vending machine caught my eye with its claims of Candy & Snacks . . . "Candy Ann Snacks." No name seemed appropriate. Then one evening my friends and I were having dinner at a health food restaurant. I asked the waitress what the natural milkshake flavor-of-the-month was and she replied, "Lola Berry."

How would Lola walk? How

Every Saturday Lola would wear a new dress, the shorter the better, 'cause Lola had a great pair of gams.

would she talk? I began imagining moments from her life.

Lola walked as though she was holding a full gin martini in each hand. "I call it the wash cycle," she proudly proclaimed. Vanity kept Lola from buying shoes of a comfortable width; her feet in constant pain, Lola would prop herself on top of trash cans that lined the street to rest her feet on the way to the next bar. "Lola, that's where you belong, on top of the trash," people would joke. She replied: "I bet you say that to all the girls, including your mother."

One of my naive expectations was that I would be beautiful and pass as a woman. That first night out with Dan I felt the makeup and costume must be subdued. Subdued I was! I looked like a man in bad drag. Once I changed my focus and realized that I was *going* to look like a man in drag, I decided to do *good* drag, and that meant exaggeration.

Dan became Kitty Litter. And I was Lola. Gradually my nights out as Lola became a focus for my life.

There was always a lot of preparation involved before going out. The outfits were purchased first, then accessories were purchased to complement the individual outfits. A high neck and sleeves were useful in covering the hair on my chest; long gloves hid the hair on my arms. I wore two pair of dance tights and one pair of nylons to cover the hair on my legs. My wigs were always brown and styled especially for me. Most of them were long and backcombed into fuller, higher styles. I was now buying theatrical grease paint to cover my heavy beard.

If Kitty and I were meeting at 9:00 p.m. I would start preparing myself at 5:30. I would shave twice, each time using a new razor blade. Then I would apply ice over my entire face and neck to close pores and ease the irritation from shaving. It took an hour or more to apply the makeup. Sometimes my friend Bobby would help, ordering me to "give them eyes for days," his way of telling me to apply more eye makeup. After the makeup came the dress, then the wig and accessories — gloves, then bracelets, and finally the very-high-heeled shoes. Bobby, usually the first to see me, would pass judgment. A disapproving look on his face meant the dress was too long, the wig was not high enough, or the makeup wasn't as heavy as he liked. In his eyes, Lola was a whore.

Kitty would arrive shortly thereafter. We would shriek approvals, blow kisses, and have a cocktail or two, with straws so as not to smear our lipstick. Then we'd go out on the town.

Our first appearances were like out-of-town tryouts. The first few times Kitty and I went out, we began the evening on Turk Street, then moved on to Polk before going to the Castro, our Big Time. Turk and Polk Streets are lesser gay-populated areas. There is also a vast difference in the age of the men in these two areas. On Turk Street the men are middle-aged and older. They've seen it all. On Polk Street the gay men are quite young, and mix with straight people. Kitty and I went there primarily for the responses from the straight people, while we felt secure because of the gay population. We were given strong, approving, wonderful receptions. Once our confidence was up, we went to the Castro, the most highly populated gay area in the city with the greatest diversity of men.

Kitty Litter and Lola Berry dominated Castro Street on Saturday nights for nearly two years. During that period of time I began examining the phenomenon of Lola Berry. Why was she so popular? And at the same time, why was I so angry? I felt anger for the person I was involved with,

Lola (center) with friends.

anger that stemmed from so many gay men I had previously encountered who never allowed me close enough to them. Men who asked me to meet them for dinner and never showed up; all those promised phone calls that never came; all those one-night stands that were just that, and no more. Was I that unappealing? Wasn't I smart enough? Or was it that I just didn't fit the mold of the three-piece suit? Finding that house with the white picket fence, and someone to share it with, wasn't going to be easy. It was out of all this anger that the Lola Berry character grew.

In the summer of 1982 while vacationing at a gay resort on the Russian River, my friend Bobby overheard one man telling his companion, "See her, she's really nice." He was pointing at a redhead. He pointed to a brunette and warned, "But see her, she's a real bitch!" The redhead was Kitty Litter. The brunette was Lola.

I turned the bitchiness to my advantage. I did it behind a mask. The anger became fast, intelligent, bitchy humor. I began to realize that through this humor I was bringing happiness into people's lives, somehow hoping some of it would return to mine.

Since doing drag was an illusion, Lola would tell people, "If I look old, I'm meant to. It's part of the illusion I'm trying to achieve." I would say this in jest, yet I was concerned with getting old in a gay community, which triples the emphasis society has already placed on youth and beauty. My cries were silent but Lola had plenty to say. "I'm like fine wine gathering dust in a cellar. Only I don't get better, I get bitter." In reality the cellar was my apartment; the dust, vague memories of the men who fled in the night. "I'm grateful," Lola would say. "I don't have to worry about what they might want for breakfast!" On the occasions men would linger through the night, I would serve Pop Tarts. It seemed appropriate. "Lola, why can't you get a man?" some would ask. Lola replied, "Getting them is easy; I haven't read the chapter on how to keep them." I was told by more than one man that I had "begging eyes." If this is true, my eyes "begged" for something these men could not produce: intelligence, compassion and creativity.

When I was in drag, nothing seemed impossible. Drag allowed me to react to people who would never get to know who I was.

Sean Jones

Kitty and I were competitive but our competition was controlled. It was the competition within myself that was limitless, uncontrolled and leading me into self-destruction. As the fun of doing drugs subsided, I projected more hysteria. Our antics ranged widely. Kitty always portrayed the naive, sweet cheerleader from the 1950s. I, of course, was my own sarcastic and bitchy self. The absurdity of someone in drag passing judgments on someone else seemed to make a lot of people laugh. I almost always parted from these situations remembered and greatly liked. There were, however, a few instances where I went too far. How was I to know that one woman I talked with really did apply her makeup with a paint roller?

A lot of the time I turned the humor toward myself. I would tell people "I need an ice-cream scoop to get this makeup out of my pores." Or when they asked me, "Who does your hair?" I'd reply, "It's by Cuisinart." I was in perpetual movement, always ready with a response, never wanting to miss a great opportunity. These people supplied me with all the straight lines.

As time passed, Kitty and I would enter a bar to applause, the patrons shouting "Hi Kitty! Hi Lola!" Many would have friends from out of town and wanted to make certain they had the opportunity to meet us. Many people wanted to buy us drinks. On those rare occasions when no drink offers came my way, I would simply take someone's drink off the table or out of their hands and thank them. No one was ever appalled by this. They came to expect it of me. Lola stuck the little paper umbrellas in her big hair to keep track of how many drinks she'd had.

Kitty and I started appealing to large groups of people. By the time Halloween 1982 came around, we had a large following. Three blocks of Castro Street were closed to vehicle traffic, but I arrived on the hood of a Mack truck. Like most everything we did, this was totally spontaneous. I jumped on

the running board on the passenger side and somehow hoisted myself up, using the frame of the open window as a step. I was able to pull myself up to the roof of the cab and slide down the windshield to the hood. I waved to the crowd like a beauty-pageant queen on parade and the crowd cheered my arrival. The truck was coming down 18th Street, which crosses Castro. The police were monitoring that intersection, trying their best to prevent the traffic and the crowds from creating a jam. Their methods were almost effective until Lola began directing traffic, too.

Picking up flares, one in each hand, I ran in front of the row of pedestrians waiting for the policemen's signal and in my loudest voice yelled "Cross!" The pedestrians cheerfully obeyed, but the cars were at a dead stop. Lola rectified this by getting on the hood of one, flares still clutched in her hands, shouting "Drag Queen coming through! Drag Queen coming through!" Once again the command was followed and the crowd parted.

I entertained myself and the crowds with these antics for quite some time until a police officer approached me. While I listened to his complaint, I threw my head over my shoulder and yelled, "Cross!" I just couldn't let those people stand there!

Kitty and I performed on top of phone booths, sometimes simulating sex with strangers who climbed up to be with us. The crowd below handed us open bottles, some wanting us to spit the alcohol down on them or, occasionally, to urinate on them. Oddly enough, climbing a phone booth in high heels never presented a problem. Getting down was another matter. We would shout, "Is there a man out there butch enough to catch us?" Nine times out of ten, a lesbian would come forward to offer her assistance.

Kitty and I would steal pots of fresh coffee from the 24-hour donut shop and serve it to the crowd that lingered on the street after the bars closed. We would return the empty pots to the admonishments of the clerk, but that never prevented us from taking another pot, along with cups and sugar and creamer for those who wanted them. Well, everyone wanted refills!

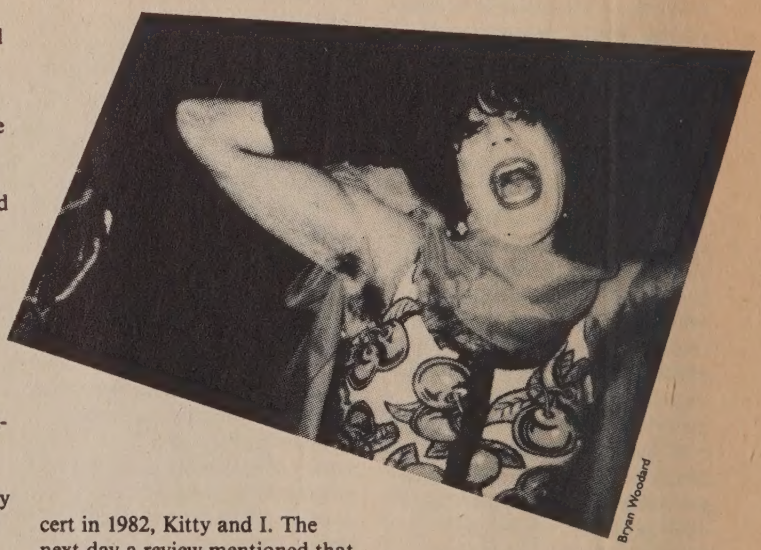
Did any of this take nerve or a lack of self-respect? For me, it took both. I began to loathe the thought of doing drag. I would start drinking as I applied my makeup, taking the edge off, but my drinking increased. Drinks were often purchased for me, and Lola could never say no. But was this the problem? When I was in drag nothing seemed impossible. Drag allowed me the separate identity to do, act, and react to people who would never get to know who I was. I wanted to find my separate identity. Drag, drinking and drugs were all distractions from this process. My long gloves hid not only the hair on my arms, but the needle tracks.

We went to a Bette Midler concert in 1982, Kitty and I. The next day a review mentioned that "the freaks were running rampant." Is that what I was, a freak? No. The critic just didn't get it. I wasn't serious. I never did drag in that vein. The idea of what a man dressed as a woman represents is often blurred. Some people consider it a threat no matter how it's presented. An incident in Las Vegas brought this clearly to light.

Shortly after my 21st birthday, in January of '83, Dan, Bobby and I went to Las Vegas. Our first night there, Dan and I dressed in drag and walked the strip with Bobby. We decided to take a taxi from the Flamingo Hotel to the downtown area. As we left the taxi we were arrested. We had been under surveillance and had been followed by the police. The Las Vegas police thought we were prostitutes, Bobby our trick. Once the police realized we were men in drag, they became angry, physically and verbally abusive. We were arrested for being public nuisances, taken to jail and photographed for mugshots, fingerprinted and booked. I overheard one of the arresting officers say we were "spotted on the $150 corner." That made me very proud.

Our treatment was abusive, the arrest illegal.

We waited for three hours, interactions limited to occasional threats in which we "sissy boys" were told we'd be taught a lesson. We were finally released without bail and told we would have to return for a court hearing.



Kitty and I were dressed in what remained of our outfits. During our ordeal with the police a lot of our clothing had been torn.

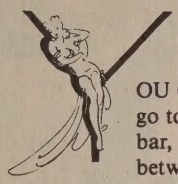
Upon our return home I hired a lawyer in Las Vegas. The charges were dropped. There is no record

of our arrest. Thank God we didn't have to return for a court hearing. I didn't have a simple black dress to my name!

It was at this time that I decided to stop doing drag. I needed to find my own identity. The mask of makeup and wig was becoming transparent, adding to my confusion with the mark of recognition. People would see me out of drag and say "Hi, Lola." I had once thought I didn't want people to know it was me behind the Lola character, yet as more people began recognizing me out of drag I began to wish it was *me* they knew — Robert Serian. I began resenting the character of my own invention. I felt incapable of living up to Lola Berry. I was now in a bizarre competition with myselves. A friend would refer to me as her "drag queen friend," and when I was finally introduced to her friends they actually expected to meet a transvestite. I began emotionally withdrawing from Kitty Litter, building walls that would create a safe separation. Now when I returned from an evening out with Kitty, I couldn't wait to take off my clothes and scrub off the layers of makeup. Lola would sit in a massive pile on the floor.

Lola would have to disappear, at least for a while. How would I do this? The answer was obvious. Since Lola always had a passion for theatrics she would go into seclusion a la Greta Garbo. When I went to the Castro and people would ask me where Lola was, the answer would vary. I would tell some people, "Lola met a man and is vacationing on the French Riviera." To others I would simply say, "Lola got herself knocked up and is busy looking into abortion clinics." These were the two more extravagant tales. The one I most commonly told was "Lola O.D.ed! Hadn't ya heard?" This was the closest to the truth.

Not long after this, Dan — Kitty Litter — left for Tokyo to work as a professional dancer. During his absence I tried several times to stop using drugs, unsuccessfully. It wasn't until April of 1985 that I finally began recovery.



OU CAN STILL go to that same bar, weeknights between 6:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., and exchange stories with Lola. The name of the bar has been changed to "Buddies" and yes, the neon martini glass hangs in darkness. A new owner took over when George died a little over a year ago from a heart attack. The alcove to the side that once housed the pool table has been turned into a small dance area complete with a mirrored ball. The jukebox sits silent in the back room next to the ice machine. Dave, the new owner, tends bar and doubles as disc jockey, changing the prerecorded cassettes at ninety-minute intervals.

Lola proclaims that she came with the territory. Few would dispute this. As your eyes adjust to the darkness, you can see that Lola, too, has changed. Lines have formed around her eyes and mouth, those cruel lines daylight enhances. She's put on some weight and wears glasses on a chain around her neck. Oh, vanity! Her hair is still piled high, her makeup plentiful. She still struts that unmistakable strut from table to table under a cloud of her cigarette smoke. Lola's doctor told her to stop smoking and drinking. "He got me so nervous I'm smoking more," Lola reports. The old regulars are scarce. Some died, others switched to "Betty's" up the street. Lola is still the best when it comes to remembering a face. Since Kitty moved, Lola spends her Saturday nights at "Betty's," reminiscing with the regulars about the "good old days." It's funny, the "good old days" were five short years ago . . . If you're ever in the neighborhood, why don't you stop in and give your regards to Lola. You can't mistake her. Look for the big hair, new makeup and that great pair of gams . . . Please tell her Rob sent you. ■

BELLY ON A STICK

BY

EBERLE UMBACH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FAY JONES

THE FLESH OPENS IN PINK FOLDS. The man's hips move with each jab and thrust. He is nervous — it always makes him nervous. The woman is waiting patiently. She likes it almost raw, close to the bone. The man swears under his breath as the knife slips in his hand. Both the knife and fork have silver handles shaped like charging bulls. The woman is at his side holding a slotted spoon. After he lays each slice on a plate, she adds spoonfuls of vegetables, steaming potatoes. The children's heads go up and down as the plates are lifted and placed in front of them.

A fable, if you will, about the mysterious power of female sexuality, and the convulsions gender has led us through. This is, amazingly enough, Eberle Umbach's first publication. She writes: "Born in Illinois. Studied fiction writing at Oberlin College and Johns Hopkins University. Live in Charlottesville, Virginia with parrot Pablo." Thanks to old friend j.d. Smith for passing this nugget on.
—Sallie Tisdale

"And your mother," the man tells them, flourishing the knife and fork, "wanted me to sell all her silver, in the hard time. I told her I'd as soon she walked the streets as sell her mother's silver."

The girl looks at herself upside-down in her spoon: Is that me? she wonders. The boy touches his knife with a vague thrill of terror — model ships and tiny fortresses, a hundred colored flags. They will both have a sip of wine, since it's a special occasion. This oppresses them, and they keep perfect silence. The carving drones on longer than a sermon. Weariness touches their faces. They know that their father's tense neck and shortened breath, their mother's patient smile, are part of something that happened before they were born. Such a long litany of sin: no singing at the table, no touching at the table.

It's a promiscuous universe. The stars, sun, and moon wander the sky at will, following their pleasure, not the laws of motion or decency. The earth alone is without a lover, and for this reason it is always dark. Until one day a woman climbs a tall tree and takes off her dress. It's the same old story: the moon starts hanging around a lot, they marry and settle down. The moon adopts fixed movements according to the woman's monthly cycle. The sun and stars follow suit, and it is Africa. Drumbeats, bright feathers drifting through the trees, the smell of a barbecue on the air. Even stones have odors, even stumps give birth. If you go listen to the spring-frogs sing, their doo wa bop can make you pregnant. Their tongues promise everything, and frogs have been married for this reason alone, but unwisely: they can never chew their food loudly enough to satisfy their in-laws.

The woman is holding a wooden figure, broad-faced with a narrow body. The man is eating breakfast.

"What's that, frog-face?" he asks her.

"Don't sweet-talk me," she says, "just because you're dying to know." She puts a finger provocatively in her ear.

"Who, me?" he says, "I don't want to know. Looks like something the tapir coughed up, that's all."

She closes her eyes and tries to remember what the earthworm promised her. A new world, or else a very old one.

"It's a household goddess," she says. "Name of spoon, according to the earthworm."

The man's jaw drops. "You've been to see the earthworm?"

"Mmm-hmm," she says slowly, stroking her thigh almost absent-mindedly. The earthworm is not known for his chastity.

"So that's his," he accuses her.

"Well, it's mine anyway," she says, "that's what counts."

"How do you know it's not mine?" he asks.

She frowns at it. "Doesn't look much like you, does it?"

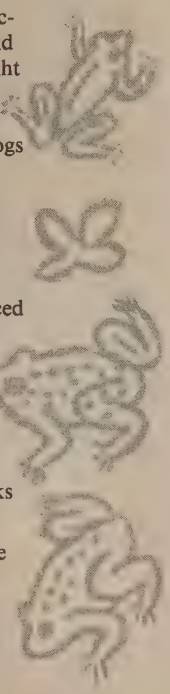
"Hand it over," he says, and he is serious.

She shrieks as he approaches. "It's my time, my time of month. If you come near me you know perfectly well you'll drop dead as a rotten fig."

He doesn't think it's her time, but he backs out the door anyway, shielding his eyes with his left hand, just to be on the safe side.

"Spoons, spoons," he thinks, slashing at the jungle with his machete, "who cares about spoons anyway. Just a big belly on a stick. Bellies are what snakes wallow along in the dirt on. In the dirt. Snakes and women." An apple rolls to his feet and he munches on it as he walks. "It's the straight and narrow that counts, the upward things, erect like man."

The smell of the jungle nauseates him suddenly, the flowers that open even after he's cut the stalks — they're mocking him, he's sure of it, they will suck him back into the earth. He slashes in a frenzy, and at last the air clears. Ancient Greece is before him. Marble and a pristine sky. Proud columns and noble brows. Just as he pictured it. He returns home a wiser man, carring only a small knife, a sharp tongue.



"About that spoon," he says to the woman. "Consider, if you will, that a spoon is made, not born. Am I correct? And what is the spoon made with? A knife. Exactly. Now, who owns the knife? Myself. You are very perceptive. The knife is the father of the spoon, and therefore possesses the spoon. And our children shall bear my name and you too shall bear my name, so is it written, and you won't be seeing any more earthworms without my say-so."

"That's a very sexy song," she says, "what do you call it?"

"Logic," he says modestly, "the spoon please?"

"How about a kiss first?" she asks.

He looks uncomfortable. "My dear, I am a very busy man. Word gets around quickly. I have to build a fortress. There's going to be trouble."

He is right. They are interrupted by waves of barbarians that come screaming down the hillsides. Stowed away in an underground room with the valuables, she listens to the men upstairs. It's confusing. She hears swords, death-wails, crashing, and then singing, drinking songs, and laughter; there are long stories she can't follow, then more crashing, swords again.

It gets colder. She puts on layer after layer of clothing. As she does this, the sounds from above her get fainter, until finally she hears nothing. This disturbs her. She is convinced something is being covered up. She begins to dig and unearths suits of armor by the dozen. She stands them up. "Speak to me," she demands, but they don't. They clearly don't like to be touched. Soon she learns their ways, how to coax them without frightening them; the man appears at last.

The first thing she does is give him the spoon. ►

"Here. You can have it. Really. This is not my idea of a good time. I'd like to go home now."

He laughs good-naturedly as he leads her upstairs. She steps outside to a completely unfamiliar world. Miniature, with fences and roads. Stubby plants are growing up in squares of dull color, the trees are laughably short. The horizon has closed in, the same muddy blue as the many small rivers, with ducks. Chickens peck at her feet. Carts and windmills dot the gentle hills, there are wheels everywhere, the slow thudding of oxen. The man has one on a rope.

"What kind of an animal is that?" she asks in dismay.

He leans on his staff. "Each of God's creatures has its proper place and function, and each creature, fulfilling its function, is noble. The ox is a noble beast. Traditionally used for sacrifice or labor." He hands her the rope and takes the spoon. Already the afternoon sun is gilding the scene: woman, ox, and field. He has seen pictures of this. Suddenly he remembers his boyhood: the warm loaves, sweet butter, his mother at the loom . . .

"My country!" he shouts, and starts to run, raising the spoon in one fist. The spoon is always before him, a silver woman, a bowsprit. The salt spray stings his face. Ships are taking off, nations are born. He charts the sky and water. When he names the Big Dipper, he is thinking of home, the woman at the hearth stirring a steaming pot. Thinking of her, he is moved deeply by the sense of his dignity, and he conquers countries.

Back home, two hundred mules carrying gold, silver, and precious gems follow him through the narrow streets, past the flower-girls and the match-girls, past the orange- and apple-girls, the pastry-girls.

The woman is waiting at his house. He throws treasures at her feet and kneels.

"I return, your humble servant, with unworthy gifts. It was your image that upheld me through danger and adventure. Through great danger and great adventure."

She yawns behind one hand as he kisses the other, and she looks longingly at a page-boy through the window. Where there was a moat there is a garden. Larks, blackbirds, pheasants, woodcocks, quail, and snipe are served up in covered dishes. A ruff the size of a dinner-plate circles her neck, and her hair is a tower of birds, ships, and fruit that grazes the ceiling. The distances he has mapped are nothing to the new width of her skirt. Whalebone and leather, unnavigable region. Standing at its edge, he can barely reach far enough to take possession of her hand.

He tells of his success: the barbaric silver earrings of the women will be melted down into coin. The treasury will grow big with coins and bring forth companies that will serve the country faithfully and protect her honor throughout the world, as tenderly as he protected her own.

She isn't listening. She is thinking of earrings, the barbaric women, who have thirty husbands at a time, who walk the streets alone after dark, down to the water where they stand and call in the sea-monsters. She has seen pictures of the sea-monsters. They have ships in their mouths. An old memory envelopes her like perfume, makes her dizzy and dreamy, she floats downstairs for tea.

"And just what are these?" the man demands.

"Table-forks," she says, "all the best families are using them now."

"Instruments of the Devil do not belong on an English table," he shouts. "I've seen them, yes I've seen them, at the Italian courts, in the hands of painted women, their laughing eyes, their dresses cut to here, their dark eyes, their dresses cut to here, their wanton eyes, their dresses cut to here . . ." A vein bursts in his throat and all is darkness.

Battle-cries rouse him, it's wartime again. The fathers are packing silver spoons in chests, under floorboards; the sons are packing small portraits of their sweethearts in oval frames along with the instruments they will use that night to penetrate and strip bare the houses of Catholics. The Church of England, they cry, we will make her pure again.

The man throws his hat on the table.

"Our friends are selling their silver, sacrificing everything for the cause, and here you are in a new dress, lace and ribbons."

"I thought you would like it," she says.

"It's frivolous. And it's shameful. My brother's wife has sold all her jewels but her wedding ring."

"I'll wear what I please, what does it matter what I wear?" she says.

"Here I am about to go off to a riot, here I am about to go off and be killed, and all you can talk about is clothes."

She isn't worried. They are invincible. They are men of God and small businesses.

He comes home to an enlightened age and takes up hunting. Trees grow in lines, flowers in geometric patterns. He feels himself to be a part of a great order, and adopts a slow heavy walk, a benevolent eye. The wealth of nations is upon him. His grounds sport an Italian villa, a Grecian ruin, and a decorative shepherd's hut. Dictionaries are invented so that illegitimate meanings will not be fathered on hapless words. His silverware is called a "service" and bears the family crest on matching handles. His table is laid. His table is laid with a cloth of a Persian pattern, locally made. His wife is decked out. His wife is decked out in silks from the East, furs from the North, furs from the West, and feathers from the South. After dinner the man looks at her with a gleam in his eye, thinking of empires. He rises to go to bed and takes her hand, talking of duty. Daytime and nighttime, putting it in the bank.

Soot begins to fall from the sky, and makes a general hush. Statues rise out of the ground: there are City Fathers, Founding Fathers, Fathers of the Age; there are naked women, many with wings. Mating on such a grand scale causes an increase in at-

mospheric pressure. Glasses begin to sweat, and doilies are placed beneath them. Women faint in their stays. It drizzles constantly.

The hum of machinery fills the air, an industrial hymn: "production, production." The factories are filled and turn out icons for every household: knife, spoon, fork, little leaden family. Lamps are lit earlier, but the sky darkens and darkens. A storm is gathering.

WHEN IT CLEARS, they're dancing the African bamboula at Place Congo, and every night is ladies' night at Lulu White's Mahogany Hall. Prices go down and skirts go up. In faraway mulberry trees the worms are at work and there are silk stockings for all, with Geisha girls on the packages, and Turkish cigarettes with belly dancers. The beauty parlors emit a steady stream of women with short hair. Plastic is on the horizon, and a hundred new shades of pink: choose by number, order by mail.

The woman lives alone now, and works for the phone company. The network spans the country, and every morning she plugs in. While houses are lit at the touch of a finger she makes connections, her feet tapping in a line of high-heeled shoes: May I have your number please?

Off at five, making eyes in the elevated train. It's a cakewalk in the sky — freedom and blues. Balloons go up and the past is out of style. Intoxicating to have legs again — and more. To dance all night, drink smoke vote, and more: everybody's doing it, the grizzly bear, bunny hug, she's humming in the street. She's a ragtime baby, she's the Sunshine Girl.

In her kitchenette at midnight she's got a firm hold on a bottle of gin. Voices on the line: there are ways, honey, there are ways. Certain doctors. But they cost. Don't trust them. Go ahead and have it, there are seaside resorts, you can do it quietly, they take it off your hands afterwards. If you can quit your job. Of course they'll fire you, don't be a fool.

The room rocks her gently, waves of warmth from the radiator, a radio next door. Her party dress is swaying on its hanger, its scent fills the room: rhinestones, mother-of-pearl. A truck idling in the street sets her windchimes going, and she walks to the window: men unloading crates of fruit. She takes her stockings off the curtain rod and curls up on the bed. A knock on the door; she lies still; then loosens her dress.

There are ways. A bottle of gin and a scalding bath. A Coca-Cola douche, shake the bottle first. A knitting needle. People say you can do it with a spoon.

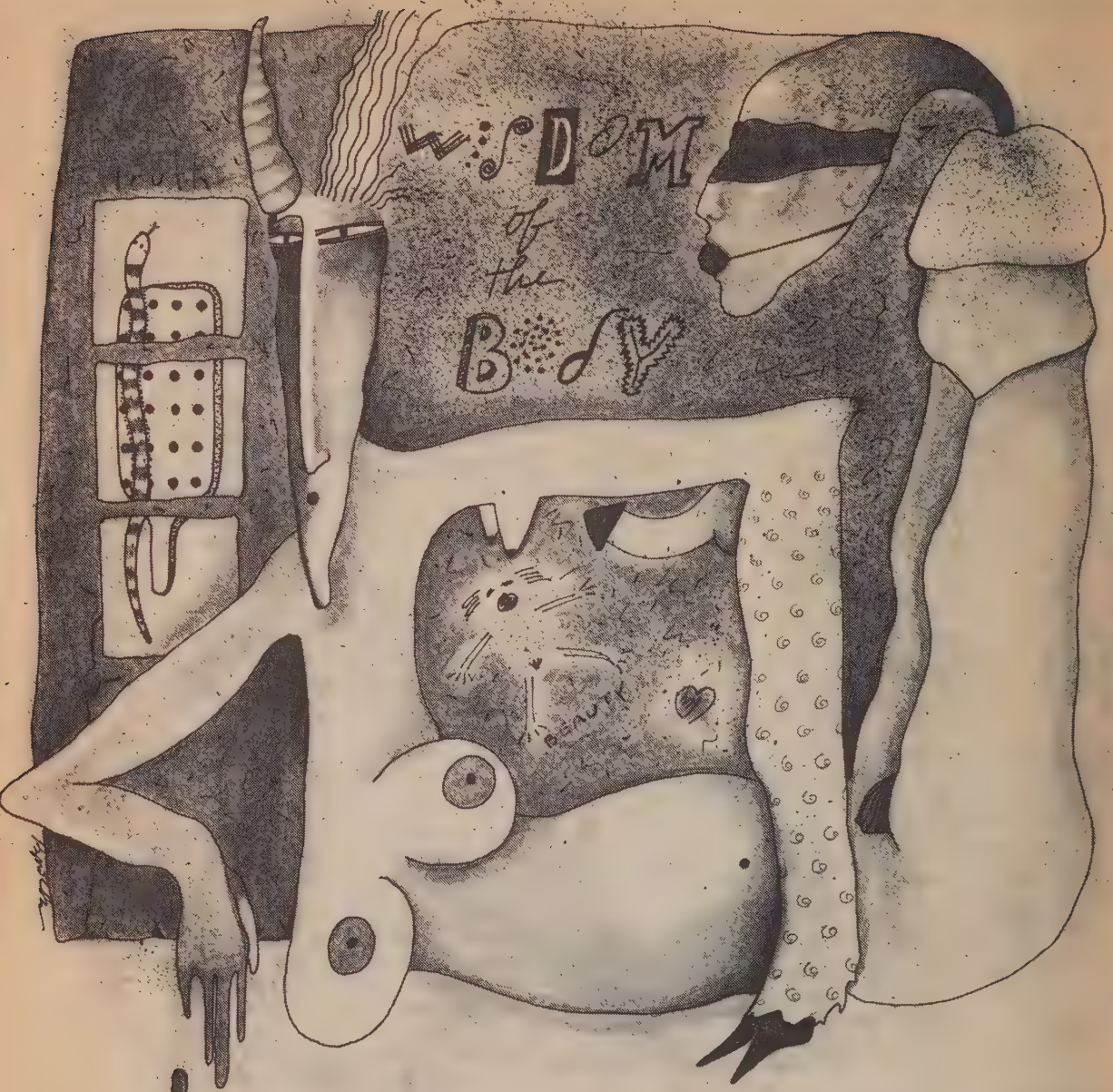
The spoon is cool in her hand. The bedside lamp is a glass basket of glass fruit, from home, mother tucking her in, mother kissing her cheek. She looks at herself upside-down in the spoon and giggles. A tug boat pulls away from the harbor, hooting. She can hear the winches grinding, the sailors laughing.

This can't be right, she thinks, holding the spoon out in front of her, this can't be how it's done. She giggles again, snuggles into the pillows — scoop it out like a breakfast egg? It won't work.

The room goes blurred and soft, she is rubbing and rubbing at the handle of the spoon, half dreaming, half humming: "Memories of You," a jukebox song — bubbles rising through the colored pillars, a jungle scene in the background, the automatic arm fitting the needle to the groove. She brings the spoon close again to see what she is rubbing. A raised line of print, name of the maker: "Franklin and Sons." A drumbeat starts in her throat; the room snaps back into focus suddenly, and she sees everything: the dress, the lamp, every detail of the iron bed.

Of course. That's how you do it, she realizes, and prepares herself. She turns the spoon around in her hand, presses her thumb hard into the curve of the bowl.

It's so simple. The drumbeat picks up speed. It's so simple; there should be music, she thinks, humming: "Everybody's doin' it, doin' it, doin' it . . . upside down in love love love, inside-out in love." She's giggling again. Stop that, she tells herself firmly — courage — sing something, perhaps a hymn. She plunges into "Land of Our Fathers" and moves on to "O Lord of Love Most Holy." She is floating upwards, lighter and lighter. Pink clouds are parting, dawn is coming. "Oh Daddy don't you know I'm yours." ■



BY DAVID GUY

ILLUSTRATED BY DON REYNOLDS

LYING IN BED with a woman friend, I pull back from a kiss and look at her. "I've got to tell you something."

"All right."

"I know this will sound strange. I mean it's kind of surprising. Because I got in here like it was nothing. And we've done all this kissing. I *have* done a lot of kissing. I've kissed a lot of girls. But this is the first time I've ever been to bed with a woman."

A very slight — almost imperceptible — look of surprise crosses her face. A small smile appears.

"I see," she says.

"I know it must be a shock."

"Oh well. Everybody has a first time."

"So you'll have to tell me what to do. I don't know anything."

"I will."

"I'm kind of scared."

"Everybody is, the first time."

"I always wanted to go to bed with a woman. I just never had the nerve."

"You're here now. You don't need to worry any more."

"I never thought the first time would be with my French teacher."

What I was after was the long naked embrace, top of the head to tips of the toes, soft bellies pressed together. Bellies were more important than genitals. That wasn't the only thing I liked, but it was the rock bottom thing.

IVE YEARS ago, in the midst of a larger crisis I was having about my life, I began in a new way to question my sexuality. Until then I would have said sex was a mystery, one to be delighted in. The fact that somebody might get off on fondling a shoe was something not to be horrified or disgusted by, but simply to accept with a shrug. For the rest of the world I still felt that way, but for myself I no longer did. I couldn't understand why certain acts, scenes, situations, were so entrancing to me. There were things that for various external reasons I didn't want to do, but I still felt compelled to do them. I didn't think they were wrong, but I didn't like being in the grips of a compulsion. I wanted to get to the bottom of it.

I began to talk to my friends about this subject. What is it in sex, I would say, that you really like? Are there one or two things that you're really after when you're doing everything else? What is behind the things you like to do? What's behind the whole transaction?

A friend proposed a simplified form of the same questions, one almost dizzying in the abyss it opened up: What *is* sex?

I looked into myself and realized to my astonishment that the thing I was trying to get at was not what I had always assumed. All my life I had been told — if not directly, then certainly by implication — that *what sex is* involved one major act: a man got a hard-on, put it inside a woman, and came. When that happened, sex had happened. When it didn't, it hadn't. I realized that in all my sexual encounters with women, whatever else might be happening and however much I might be enjoying it, in the back of my mind was the thought that the encounter had to end in a certain way. The need to have a hard-on at the right moment loomed as an enormous preoccupation, one that could take over my whole consciousness. Because if the encounter didn't end in that certain way, we hadn't "done it." We hadn't, to the adolescent male inside me who had formed my sexual attitudes, done anything.

I realized that fucking wasn't what I was after. It wasn't what I really liked. It often followed from what I liked, but it wasn't the thing itself, and the pressure to fuck often distracted me from what I wanted.

What I was after was the long naked embrace, top of the head to tips of the toes, soft bellies pressed together. Bellies were more important than genitals. That wasn't the only thing I liked, but it was the rock bottom thing. If I didn't get enough of that, the encounter felt incomplete.

That embrace could say various things. *I like you. Doesn't this feel good? I love you. I accept you: round belly, chubby hips, funny hair.* It could be deeply personal, but it could also be human in a way that transcended the personal, saying, *We're doing this. We're going to accept each other. We're going to love each other.* (Or, as Paul Goodman once put it, "I love you. It's nothing personal.") There was something deeply moving in even the most sordid embrace if it expressed this simple thing, the willingness of human beings to come together, this delight in and acceptance of another physical body, an acceptance I find so hard to feel for my own body.

It was really the hug I wanted, all those times I thought I was trying to get laid.

"I think the first thing you should do is suck here."

"Like a baby."

"Yes."

"Did your babies suck here?"

"Of course."

"Did you like it?"

"I did."

"Did it seem sexual?"

"You're not supposed to talk about that."

"*Here,* we can."

"Yes. It did."

"Do I suck hard?"

"However you like. I'll tell you if it's not right."

"Do I bite?"

"*Gent*ly."

"I notice you let the hair grow under your arms."

"Yes."

"Why is that?"

"To make a strong feminist state-

*Women liberated their sexual fantasies, for better or worse, from the realm of secrecy some years ago. Men were not quick to follow down the road of confession. Novelist David Guy (*Football Dreams, The Man Who Loved Dirty Books, *and* Second Brother*) gives it a try. With pleasure and not a small amount of glee, I offer you his explanation of himself.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

ment. And so men can lick there."

"Come on. Men don't lick there."

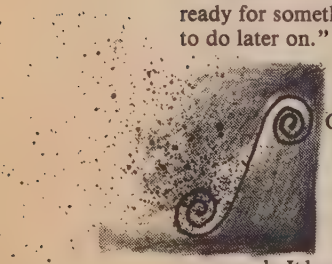
"They do. You're going to lick there, when I feel sucked enough.""

"Doesn't it taste funny?"

"It tastes . . . different. You're going to have some new tastes here. It tastes funky. Sexy."

"Hmmm."

"You have to lick there to get ready for something you're going to do later on."



SOME YEARS ago, I was troubled by a persistent sexual fantasy. I thought about it all the time, wanted it very much. It became an obsession. The woman I was with didn't want to act it out, so it became a problem between us. It had countless variations, but its main feature was that a woman would come to me — I wouldn't have said anything, made any advance — and suck my cock. There might be an elaborate situation surrounding this event. She might do a languorous strip. She might fondle and caress me. She might whisper dirty little words in my ear. But she always went down on me.

I wanted people to look at me and know my need. I wanted not to have to speak.

My lover couldn't understand why I wanted her to do something she didn't like. To her this imagined scene had nothing to do with what was between us. She felt demeaned by being asked to do it. She wondered if I wanted her to do it just because she didn't want to, if what I really wanted was to give her pain. I didn't think that was so. I wasn't sure why I wanted this thing. I just knew I thought about it all the time.

The therapist I was seeing at the time, a good but limited pastoral care counselor, talked with me about this problem. He wasn't squeamish about it, and he could certainly understand my wanting to get blown, but he felt my lover's objections closed the discussion. He saw nothing more in it than a single conflict. "If she doesn't want to," he said, "you'll just have to do without it."

I saw my life stretched in front of me, barren of blow jobs. I wasn't sure I could abide such a fate.

It was at about that time that I was leaving my teaching job. I had been at the school for six years, ever since it had been founded; I had been chairman of the English department; and I thought — or at least imagined, with my novelist's imagination — that some special notice might be taken of me at the awards ceremony in the last week of school. Perhaps I would receive an award for outstanding service. Parents would rush up to me — tears in their eyes — to thank me for all I had done for their children. The more attractive women might hug and kiss me. (Maybe one would sneak me off to an empty classroom for a blow job!)

On the actual day, though, it was an awards ceremony like any other. Students were excited because the year was coming to an end. Parents were there because their children were getting awards, not because they wanted to speak to a teacher. Other teachers were also leaving the school, and it wouldn't have done to single one out. There was no special award in the ceremony, and no one so much as spoke to me about the fact that I was leaving.

I was crushed. I had been looking forward to that ceremony for weeks. I had put in years of hard work at that school, with many students, and I was getting no thanks. The truth was that I was ambivalent that day. I felt that I had to leave my job, but I was scared. I would miss my students, miss my colleagues. I was leaving a small community for the cold cruel world. It was a major moment in my life, and I wanted some notice to be taken of it. I longed for an emotional connection that hadn't been made.

That afternoon, for the first time in my life — as I walked up a stairway back to my empty classroom, cars pulling away in the parking lot — I saw a connection between a sexual fantasy and an attitude in my life. I had been puzzling for days over my obsession with that fantasy, and the connection hit me dead between the eyes. What I had been longing for that afternoon was exactly analogous to my fantasy. I wanted people to look at me and know my need. I wanted not to have to speak. I wanted them to come up and lavish their attention on me. I wanted them to shower me with affection.

What I had been hoping for was a dream. In the perfect world that existed in my head it had happened, but in the real world it hadn't. I could sit around and wallow in disappointment or I could enter the real world. I could go up to people and say, "This is a hard moment for me. I'm feeling very emotional." I could say, "I've enjoyed working with you." Or, "I've enjoyed teaching you." I wanted an emotional connection, and I could make it come about. Nobody was going to refuse me if I showed what I was feeling.

Suddenly I was seeing the passivity that permeated my whole life. I had been blaming the world for not being what I wanted, instead of being another way in the world myself. Too often I had sat around waiting for something to happen that I could have made happen. My disappointment was not only at what hadn't occurred, but also (secretly) at my failure to act. I saw that this passive attitude toward the world — lying there waiting for it to come to me — was an old habit of mine. I saw that, by making myself aware of it, I could change it.

My sexual fantasy had been telling me not just what I wanted in bed, but something about who I was as a person. It wasn't just that I wanted to get blown. It wasn't just that I wanted the woman to come to me. It was a sexual wish, but also more than that. So that even when I acted it out, it returned. The larger wish that stood behind the fantasy hadn't been touched.

I still enjoy being passive in bed sometimes. Especially when I have had to assert myself out in the world, I like the feeling of lying there and taking it. Of being in the hands (or the mouth) of a woman who knows just what I want. Out in the world that wish has led to a lot of disappointment. But when I know what it's about — and knowing seems actually to add to the pleasure — the bedroom is a safe place to act it out.

"All my life I've wanted to lie here and look at this. Always."

"Look all you want."

"Even just yesterday. I'd have done anything to look at this. Paid any price."

"If I'd only known."

"Can I touch it?"

"Of course."

"Can I put my finger in?"

"*Gently.*"

"Does it feel good?"

"Something bigger would feel better. Do you have anything bigger?"

"I have something that's getting bigger all the time."

"Heavens."

"I'll let you know when it's really big."

"Please do. Listen. I want you to kiss that."

"What?"

"What you're looking at. I want you to suck and lick and kiss it. I want you to love it."

"Come on. People don't do that."

"They do. They're doing it all over the world."

"That's not true."

"This very moment. Sophisticated people. Great lovers."

"Isn't it dirty?"

"Not in the least."

"Doesn't it taste funny?"

"It has a taste. Some people like it. I like it."

"I'm scared."

"Everybody's scared the first time."

"I've thought of this, to tell you the truth. But actually to do it . . . "

"It's a big moment."

"Hey. I like this."

"I thought you might."

"I like it a lot. I want to do it some more."

"Please do."

"I want to do it for a long time."

"Ah."

FROM AS FAR back as I can remember, I have had fantasies of spanking. Doing it and — especially — having it done. My father occasionally spanked us as children, and that was not a happy experience, but in grade school the teacher spanked the bad kids, and that definitely had its attractions. I longed for physical contact with those women (any women!). They never touched the good kids, but the bad kids were clutched, shaken, thrown over their knees, and spanked. Sometimes the bad boys were taken into the cloakroom to be punished. I was thrilled at the thought of that intimacy. I wanted to be alone with those women, to have them speak only to me, even if their words were angry. I wanted

them to touch me, even if that meant hitting me. I wanted to be thrown over their warm thighs in the hush of that dark private cloakroom. I probably also wished I were daring enough to be bad, though I wasn't conscious of that wish. I had been raised in a household where, especially as you got older, you (so to speak) disciplined yourself. You were made to understand why something you had done was wrong. You were to keep that understanding in your head to keep you from transgressing again. Another word for that understanding was guilt. I envisioned a sharp swift punishment that would wipe the whole slate clean.

I remember acting those fantasies out with a friend when I was six years old. He was a kid who had been bad at school and had been spanked (already I was into rough trade), so it was thrilling to hear from him what it had been like and to act the scene out. Through the years such fantasies would come and go. By the time I hit puberty they seemed distinctly weird, and I would have told them to no one. I read a sex manual in which an attraction to spanking was discussed as a perversion. The fragmentary description in that book of a boy being caned by his governess — just her words as she told him what she was going to do — turned me on as nothing else ever had. I masturbated with it so many times that I committed it to memory. I searched other books for scenes of spanking. I longed to see spankings take place. I looked for pornography that featured it, but was often disappointed by how poorly it was written. I wrote my own scenes, and stashed them in a box under my bed. I would wait until it had been long enough for me to forget a scene, then take it out and masturbate with it (*my* scenes were well written). Spanking was not the only thing that turned me on in those days. Lots of things did. But there was a qualitative, as well as a quantitative difference. It touched me in a deeper place.

It is sad to me to look back on that boy who wanted to be punished so much.

Years passed. When I first started having an active sex life, I enjoyed it so much that my fantasies diminished. Eventually, as fantasies will do, they returned. Sometimes I masturbated with them. I told them to women. Some understood; others had no idea what I was talking about. A few acted them out with me. More important than what we were actually doing was the fact that they were acknowledging my fantasy, allowing it to be. I still felt a little weird about it. I discussed it with a new therapist, and could see the place in my life where it had come from. I still felt I hadn't gotten to the bottom of it.

Quite recently, after the Christmas holidays (those faultless producers of regret), during a gray bleak January, I passed through an intense period of guilt. I looked back on a marriage that had ended a year before — I had just spent my first holidays in 15 years as a single man — and all I could see was how I had been at fault. I saw the ways in which I had cut myself off emotionally from my wife. I saw how inadequate I had been to her needs. I saw the way in which my obsessive wish to be a writer, and my depression at my failures, had come between us. I berated myself for not being the lover she wanted. In my head I could also see her shortcomings, but they never got down to the level at which I was feeling this guilt. All I could feel were mine.

I told these things to my therapist, speaking from a cavernous pit of guilt that I thought I would never emerge from. He listened until I finished, and said, "You've put a mask on that person from the past. You're seeing him as evil and wicked. I want you to look back, and take that mask off him, and see him as he really was." As I looked back, the mask he was wearing seemed one of pain, not of evil, and as I lifted it off I saw a man — and a boy — who only wanted to be loved and accepted, who had twisted himself into various contortions because he didn't believe he deserved love, who had looked for love and acceptance in the wrong ways and in the wrong places and had often found something that wasn't love at all, that didn't begin to touch his hunger. But he wasn't wicked. He didn't deserve blame, but I had been blaming him. I had been speaking with the voice of conventional society — the world I had been brought up in — and I had been blaming him for everything that seemed to have gone wrong in his life. I had been beating the shit out of him.

What I actually saw at that moment in the therapist's office — and if my mouth wasn't agape literally it certainly was figuratively — was so vast that it took weeks to sort out. I saw that the guilt I was feeling, that my existence as a guilt-feeling person, went way back, before any memory, certainly before that six-year-old put himself over his friend's knee to be spanked, That my guilt didn't really have to do with the failures of my marriage, or with anything I was feeling guilty about; it was as nameless as the anxiety you feel in the small hours of the morning. That my spanking fantasies — whatever else they might be — reflected that guilt; they were a mild and exciting way to feel it without tying it to something painful. That there was some strange shuttlecock effect in my life about feeling bad and feeling good, that I never let myself feel too good, as if I were afraid of that; if I was feeling too good I would use something like my guilt feelings to make myself feel bad. That this dynamic was reflected in the rhythm of my work: I would get down on myself, make myself feel bad, in order to make up for it with the work I did. It was a method for getting work done. That other ways of getting myself down reflected the same general strategy: psychosomatic ailments, hypochondria, endless worry over things I couldn't change. My consciousness was jammed with these things; they had crowded out everything else. And in all these ways — like the governess brandishing the cane over the boy's bare buttocks, whose white flesh was already criss-crossed with a network of red stripes (I can still write this stuff; it's like riding a bicycle) — I was punishing myself.

I thought to myself — and it was like a vision of paradise, or of perfect health — what if I allowed myself to live without punishing myself? What would that be like? It was almost unimaginable. It was frightening. What would fill my consciousness, if it were emptied of all those other things?

What would fill it, of course, would be the present moment.

For the second time in my life, twelve years after the first, I had seen a way in which my sexual fantasies were inextricably linked up with who I was as a person. In this case — and it is still a recent revelation, which has not necessarily played itself out — the connection seems more problematic. The strongest feeling I had as I sat in the therapist's office and watched this revelation unfold was that I wanted to stop punishing myself. I wanted to feel pleasure and joy without punishing myself with guilt. That would seem to mean, for instance, making love without acting out or fantasizing scenes of punishment. Not that I want to scorn such fantasies if they arise, as if there were something wrong with them: that in itself would produce guilt. In that moment in the therapist's office, when I saw what was behind those fantasies, it was as if they were a giant inflatable toy that I had just stuck with a pin. They had loomed so large and bright that they seemed real. In a matter of seconds they went utterly flat.

I envisioned a sharp swift punishment that would wipe the whole slate clean.

They have disappeared before. I won't be surprised if they return. Fantasies that have been with you for most of a lifetime don't often vanish in a matter of seconds. I do think that, if they return, the place to face them will be in a context of play. There, they can be exciting. They can be held up to the light and seen for what they are. The guilt they reflect, however, is not to be played with. It plays with you.

"I love this part on a woman."

"Most men do."

"The little hill it forms when you lie on your belly like this."

"With a valley down the middle."

"Yes."

"What does it make you want to do?"

"Put my face there?"

"Do it."

"I'd like to kiss."

"Yes."

"Isn't that weird?"

"Of course not. It's so soft and smooth. Lots of men like to kiss there."

"I'd like to bite."

"*Gently.*"

"I want to run my tongue . . . "

"Yes."

"That *is* dirty."

"Not on me."

"Does it feel good?"

"It's heaven."

"I'd like to give it a little smack."

"Not too hard." ►

"Of course not."

"Oh! That was nice. A little smack is nice."

"I know."

"Ow! That *was* too hard."

"I'm sorry."

"How dare you treat your French teacher that way!"

"I kind of . . . forgot where I was."

"You won't forget again. Come up here this instant."

"I didn't mean it. I just forgot."

"Whether you meant it or not. I won't be treated this way. Turn over on this bed."

"I'll never do it again."

"You certainly won't. Now do as I say."

SEX IS THOUGHT to be an adult activity. At least adults do it a lot — often in a very serious adult way — and children, when they do sexual things, are often punished for them. But when I think of what sex involves . . . Bare bodies. Big hugs. Smacks. Tickling. Giggling. Caresses. Whispers in the dark. Licking. Sucking. Squishy noises. The mess it makes. It all seems childish to me. It seems innocent.

A major part of sex is physical, and that part is very good. Yet it is never, even the most casual encounter, just physical. Nothing in life is just physical. It is also psychic. Emotional. Spiritual. It teaches something. (Not the way one person in a classroom says something and another person hears it. The way an experience teaches you something. It becomes a part of you.) It is a psychic playground. You can try whatever you like. The fact that many people — terribly adult people — don't notice this aspect of sex doesn't mean it isn't there. Those people fail to notice a lot of things.

I am well aware that my wish to be hugged from head to toe, belly to belly, that warm close embrace that says I love and accept you, that vision of acceptance that has sent me into the arms of numerous women and caused me a great deal of anguish, really expresses my need to love myself. No woman can give me that acceptance. The very fact that I've gone to so many for it, repeated the scene so many times, lets me know that I'm seeking something that can't be found there. The wish to lie back and get blown expresses a tendency toward passivity on my part, also a wish for acceptance of my sexuality — she likes it so much that she takes it in her mouth! she lets me come! she swallows the come! — that I need to give myself. *I* need to love my cock. The wish to be thrown over a woman's knee and spanked expresses a longing to be freed from guilt that only I can free myself from. No woman can do that for me.

It is sex — what some people would call my obsession with sex — that has taught me these things.

Knowing them, I still love to be hugged that way. I love to lie back and get blown. I may well enjoy being spanked again.

I was walking down Park Avenue in New York not long ago with a writer friend — the perfect place to have this conversation — when he said, "Sometimes I think if I get my novel published I'll go on the college lecture circuit and get laid a lot. Do you ever think a thing like that?" Absolutely. Most men would understand that fantasy. I've had similar ones since my earliest youth. After all these years of having such a dream myself, though, I don't think my friend really wants to get laid a lot. That is a metaphor for what he wants. I think he wants to have written a great and wonderful novel, to be loved and admired for it. That is the wish that seems presumptuous. The desire that dare not speak its name. It strips you bare to admit such a thing. So you say you want to get laid.

A woman friend tells me she thinks you bring everything you are feeling to an act of sex, that it all comes out in that moment. It is just as true that you bring your whole life to it. What you do in bed might show you as you are. It might express things that you can't express elsewhere. You might find things there that you want to take out into the rest of your life. A woman raised in the middle of this century, taught always to defer to men, always to please them, might find it hard to express her own needs and stand up for them. In bed, with a man who understands, she might have a chance to do that. A man raised in the middle of this century, taught that he was always supposed to know things, he was to take the lead, might wish to abrogate that responsibility, to go back to the time when he took up this burden and hand it back to the woman. Not every time they make love, but sometimes. It's a chance to change the way things have always felt. It's a game a couple can play.

"Do you think it's big?"

"Yes."

"Do you think it's very big?"

"As a matter of fact I do. I think it's enormous. I've never seen one like it. And you're still just a boy!"

"Have you seen a lot?"

"Hundreds. Thousands. I haven't kept count. Check my memoirs."

"What do I do now?"

"You put it in me."

"The whole thing?"

"Every last inch."

"Do I ram it in hard?"

"No. Gently. Slowly. When it gets real hot and wet you do it hard."

"Really?"

"You bang me. You bang my box."

"Jesus. What if I do it too hard?"

"I'll tell you."

"Should I do it now?"

"*Right* now."

"I'm not sure where it goes."

"I'll show you. If I can get my hand around this enormous . . . "

"All my life I've wanted to do this."

"I know."

"I've wanted to find a woman who would show me."

"Yes."

"I still can't believe it's happening."

"It is."

"I can't believe that for once I've been so lucky."

"You're going to believe it now."

"Oh!" ■

Howl

***Howl** is the eye through which a significant part of a generation saw themselves. It has the force of truth that can never be mistaken.*

*This large-format, voluminously author-annotated edition will never find its way into the back pockets of hitchhiking high school students — it is meant to carry **Howl**'s "hydrogen jukebox"-bomb into libraries and classrooms. Instructive how-to for poets: the facsimile drafts dispel the misconception — perpetuated in part by the poet himself — that **Howl** was born whole, spontaneously, a 128-line haiku. The real work of **Howl**'s making was uncovering the poem's innovative structure (the copious extended breaths pivoting on the bases "who" and "Moloch," etc.) while respecting that which in the poem was idiosyncratic, even embarrassing; and getting rid of the (sometimes hilarious) dross. **Howl** was a personal breakthrough that made the walls of the city shake.*

*Like **Paradise Lost**, **Howl** engendered a school of inferior poetry imitative of its rhetoric but lacking its intensity of feeling — there are more parodies of **Howl** than successors. Here's the real thing.* —Steve Silberman

I was born the year of the "Howl" trial — 1957. This book is a window into a world I've known only through books, and dreamed of visiting. —Sallie Tisdale

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Allen Ginsberg
1956/1986; 194 pp.
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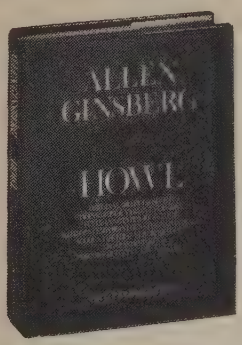

Ginsberg in the back garden of his cottage in Berkeley, 1955.

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As soon as he had made a clean copy from the original manuscript of "Howl," Part I, Ginsberg sent the first six pages to Jack Kerouac, who was living in Mexico City. The seventh page was retained ("I probably didn't send it because it was so messy") and was kept among the author's papers. On August 30, 1955, Kerouac sent the manuscript on to John Clellon Holmes in New York City. Holmes writes:

"Sometime in the mid-50's, certainly over a year before the City Lights edition, Jack Kerouac sent me a newsy letter from San Francisco, enclosing an early draft of 'Howl.' It was such a cross-hatch of emendations and inkings-out that it was hard to get any coherent idea of its accumulating power. But power it had, even then . . .

The Fessenden Review

*One evening a couple years back, my brother plopped a copy of **The Fessenden Review** in front of me, saying it had come in the mail, free. That night I read most of it, and by the next day had read every last word and was searching the corners for more.*

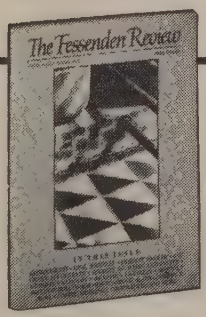
That was Vol. X, No. 2. The same thing happened with No. 4 (by then I was a subscriber). I can't think of any other magazine of which I've read every word. And I can't think of a better compliment.

Some people seem to hate it, judging by the send-me-no-more-issues-you-disgust-me letters printed therein. It enrages me, too, occasionally. But the test of my tolerance for its many acerbic reviews is a test for my tolerance of all books, and of the right of others to publish them. And I keep thinking it's a test of my love of books, and maybe of my love of the whole ball game: democracy. —Michael M. Melius

A wonderful find. First time in years I've wanted to subscribe to a new magazine. —Sallie Tisdale

•

The Wonderful Private World of Liberace
For $29.95 — you get photos of Liberace in his limousine, Liberace with his mother, Liberace with poodle Michi, Liberace with his mother, Liberace with the President (& Nancy), Liberace with his mother, with Dolly Parton, with his mother, with his mother, mother, mother. But the best by far is Today's Fun Couple: Liberace standing next to Pope Pius XII, one of them all teeth and dimples, the other looking not unlike Frosty the Snowman. There is also a long tedious chapter called "I Lost My Virginity at Sixteen" with an older lady, a "soubrette" (sic) named Miss Bea Haven, the description of which is not so much a problem of vulgarity as, you know, too much protestation. We'd be the last to comment on the sheer rudeness of the whole business, the gargantuan *waste* of keeping someone like Liberace up to his nunu in cars, furs, diamonds, and the Sistine Chapel (he had it pasted up entire on his bedroom ceiling, right over the fur-lined bed; no statement as to how or why the Pope gave it to him). The best thing they could do for him (Liberace, not the Pope) is to tie him down on the floor at Brooks Brothers for a decade or two and let him taste some taste with those snotty salesmen for awhile. When they write the history of mid-twentieth century American pomp we do hope they find a place for the Mr. Popo himself. He's just too *lewd!*



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NO MORE BAGELS

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALLEN GINSBERG

BY STEVE SILBERMAN

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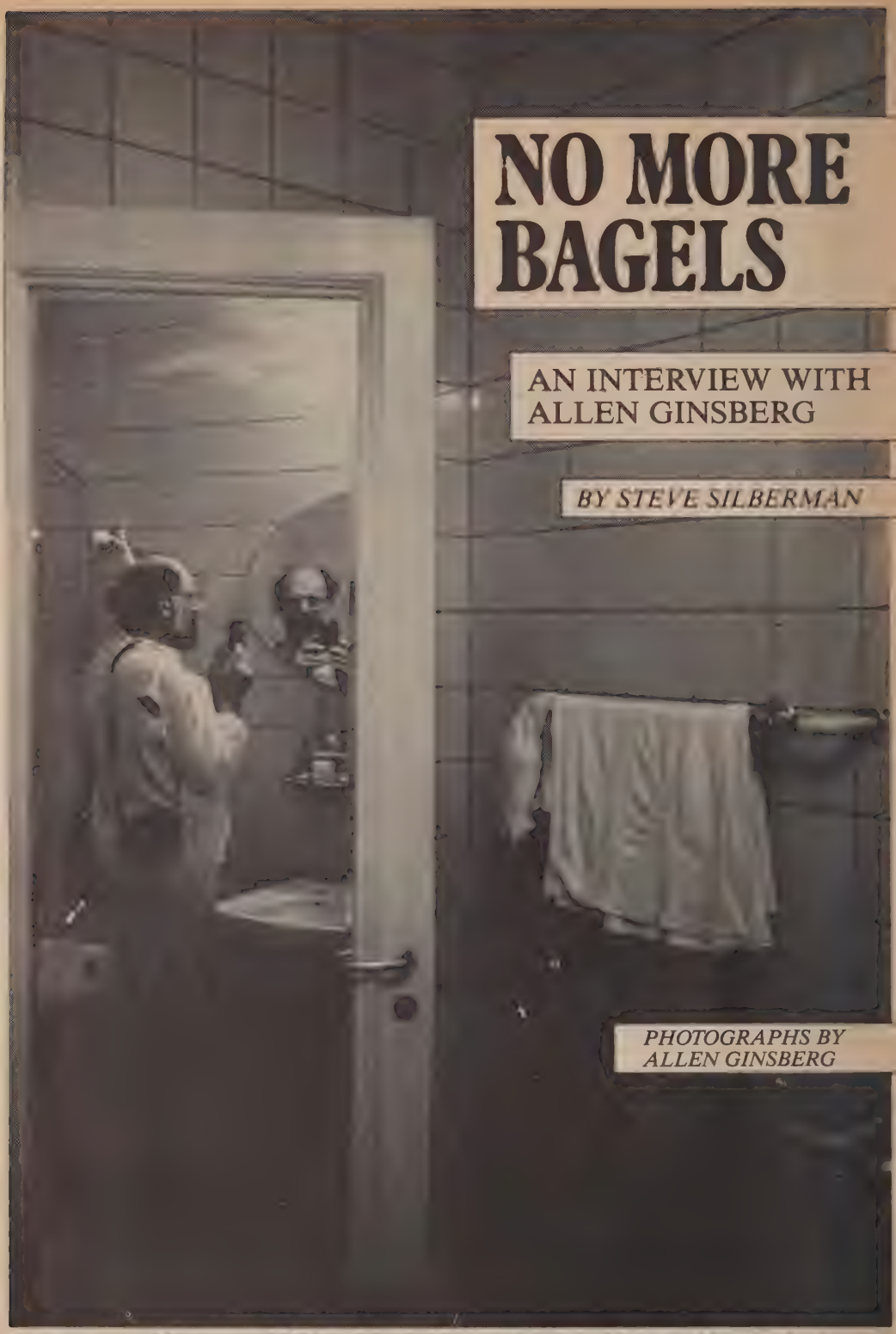


Moscow Airport Hotel Room November 18, 1985 Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg is an icon, a symbol, a special kind of celebrity, a survivor. He is also a Jewish man getting older, feeling his joints creak in the morning.

Steve Silberman, who offers this peek into Ginsberg's private life and public art, is a 29-year-old poet whose writing has appeared in San Francisco Magazine, *the* Berkeley Poetry Review, *and* Tikkun, *among others.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

My parents were young New Leftists during the sixties, and Allen Ginsberg's name was a household word. In muslin shmatte *and finger cymbals, he personified the spiritual aspect of the vision of a new society. The public affection between Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky presented a model of gay relationship unfettered by the trivializing roles set aside for homosexual men.*

I saw Ginsberg give two poetry readings on the anniversary of Neal Cassady's death in 1977, and that summer I became one of his apprentices at Naropa Institute. I was nineteen and too shy to show my hero but one poem, so my "apprenticeship" consisted of typing his journals. There was a small army of people like me.

This past January I interviewed Ginsberg in his apartment on the Lower East Side. The walls had been freshly painted white, with crates and stacks of books everywhere, unanswered correspondence, and hundreds of manuscripts sent by poets seeking a blurb or advice. The electronic telephone burbled constantly. There was a portrait of Whitman in the kitchen, a Sunday-school upright piano in a room to the side, and a little shrine with an orange meditation cushion below the bedroom window.

Ginsberg's right eye and cheek were paralyzed slightly, a vestige of Bell's palsy, but he was hardly frail. I told Ginsberg how important Howl *had been to me as an adolescent, when I saw in its sincerity and spiritual hunger and homosexual fearlessness a reflection of my own inner life. It was too bad, he said, I hadn't stumbled on Gide or Genet.*

—Steve Silberman

Steve Silberman: Walt Whitman said he wished to be remembered as "the tenderest lover." He *is* remembered as a great heart, but also as one of the most significant formal innovators in 19th-century poetry. How do you wish to be remembered?

Allen Ginsberg: What a question! I don't really want to interfere with my karma. A question like this has a feedback in that it directs people's attention, and just at this moment I'm more interested in what *other* people respond to than what I respond to — finding that out. Trying to check my subjectivity against the imagined world of others.

It would be nice to be remembered as an ecstatic poet, or a poet whose work could inspire or elevate others' minds; or a poet who spread some sense of expansion of awareness, or expansive consciousness. It would be *nice* to be remembered for generous energy — patience and generosity in energetic thought. But that's sort of like a neurotic self-idealization. I'm really at this point less interested in my own projection than curious about what it really is on the outside of my head. So maybe I'd like to be remembered as somebody who was curious about what it was like outside of his head!

SS: Your career was established outside of the Establishment, printing in small presses and not teaching in the academy; not being taught in the academy until later. How does it feel to be teaching at Brooklyn College and to have Harper & Row as your publisher?

AG: It seems like a ripening — that the culture has changed sufficiently that it will take me more or less on my own terms. Although some of my edges are smoothed down now. I don't insult people inadvertently or advertently — I try and treat them with a kind of Buddhist *gentility,* gentleness, even if I feel that they're neurotic or incompetent I try not to pin them wriggling to the wall, but try and help 'em get out of that space, or make their situation workable rather than challenging them. Trying to enrich them rather than challenge them.

I have twelve years' experience at Naropa helping run the poetics department so I'm really an old-dog teacher now, and Naropa — inasmuch as it's accredited — is in a sense institutional too. So we actually built a new institution inside the shell of the old, successfully. That's one of the signal community commune meditation-oriented projects of the ethos of the sixties that survived through the eighties and is flourishing. So I feel kind of proud that I was part of that — something real, in that sense, socially.

Brooklyn College in a way is anticlimactic. Courses in literary history of the Beat Generation that I developed at Naropa I'll be teaching at Brooklyn College. The students are less spiritual than at Naropa, so there's a question of now having to give them a spiritual infusion in the secular Brooklyn community scene.

SS: How large are your classes?

AG: Small — so small that I asked for an undergraduate larger class to get at younger meat. Maybe meet something I could sleep with or relate to emotionally. 'Cause the MFA students are all jelled already — fixated and solidified into their corsets and neuroses.

SS: Why do you think Naropa had the stability to maintain its integrity into the eighties?

AG: First of all they had a central organizing motor which was meditation. So they had a workable central thesis that was not based on the ego of the leader. Secondly, they didn't have a democratic baloney grounding — they were *in practice* democratic, but in theory totally autocratic under the guru. If you have a sort of selfless guru who's not on a power trip — or who's on a Vajrayana power trip rather than on a personal power trip — you have a worth-

Gregory Corso, Lowell, Mass. March 17, 1986, visiting Cross atop Kerouac's Grotto – see Dr Sax Book 4, Chapter 1. We came to town to fundraise Poetry Reading for Jack's statue in Park.
Allen Ginsberg

while basis for a community, based on devotion and meditation and actual awareness practice; rather than theory of getting high, or ecstatic, or . . . And the Buddhists after all have several thousand years' experience in organizing nontheistic intentional communities.

The Buddhist thing is bohemian, by its very nature. Or admits more bohemia. It's *nonjudgemental,* let us say — its practice is awareness rather than rule of law and judgement like Hebrew or Christian — sharper aesthetically, like the artist's mind which is the same as the meditative mind: no matter what thought you have you're interested in it, rather than rejecting it.

President Trungpa would come up with really interesting ideas, like methods of teaching poetry, methods of holding classes, methods of having assemblies — school assemblies to meditate rather than listen to a lot of yak. Methods of relating to but avoiding political animosity; relating to politics but not getting into the aggression of it.

They just knew how to solve a lot of problems that, say, Western hippie communes wouldn't conceive would arise — like how to raise money. The traditional Buddhist thing is you ask a patron for money, and he doesn't give, you ask him again, he doesn't give, you ask him a third time — if after the third time he gives or doesn't give you don't ask a fourth time. You just ask *three times* — that's good manners! It *communicates* but it's not aggressive. You're inviting him, but not strong-arming him. Whereas a Western commune might hit somebody up for money too many times, not knowing the middle path.

SS: You came as close as any poet has since Frost to national celebrity.

AG: International, now. It's amazing.

SS: How has that helped or hindered your poetic practice?

AG: "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." This year I got a Golden Wreath from the International Poetry Evenings in Struga, Yugoslavia. A real wreath of gold — 24 carat! *Howl* is now translated into Mainland Chinese, and a book of my poems has come out in Russia —

SS: Unexpurgated in China?

AG: No — they translated "cocksuckers" as "suckers of corks," so something to do with alcohol probably —

SS: A million Chinese Ph.D students will be —

AG: Examining this translation for centuries to come, 'til they finally liberalize and get back to "cocksuckers," and have pederasts as their alcoholics. So — it leaves it kinda wide open to do what I want and say what I want and this year, for the first time, the American academic community and the media are treating me like an elder statesman rather than a young upstart or a media creep. There was a Modern Language Association symposium on *Howl,* and they invited me to read — so I gave a reading of *Howl* on the thirtieth anniversary for an assemblage of something like 500 English professors from all over the country. That really is hitting a nerve center — and it was a good reading, with Steven Taylor playing music.

So we actually *presented* the material in a way that people doing scholarly studies had not related to — hearing the authentic sound of it, out loud with the right voice. I was all dressed up properly, for *their* point of view, so clothing wasn't interfering — my haircut was short, so they just had the voice and the words, no distractions to bother them. That probably puts the nail in the coffin as far as respectability and acceptance.

So the question is what, how does it feel? A feeling of what's it all for, and if I'm famous, gee the world must be in a terrible place. If I gotta serve for being the most famous and prestigious poet, then the world is really bad off. *(Laughing)*

Now that I'm in the position of being a loudspeaker I don't know what to say. I don't have any aggressive intention, as I did when I was younger to some extent. It's more just trying to save my own skin — straighten out my own karma. Relate to the alterations of my relations with Peter Orlovsky and growing old, and real subject: death of my family, father and mother and aunts and uncles.

I didn't get too angry and outrageous out front on the whole Reagan era — thinking that aggression was not appropriate any longer. My own aggression. And in a way I'm glad because Reagan and his whole White House macho self-contradiction is auto-destructing — like the traditional Buddhist image of the snake of conceptualization uncoiling in mid-air. I'm glad I didn't go off half-cocked in an angry rage, tilting at their windmill, but simply observed what was going on and let it happen and didn't feel obliged to become a Don Quixote. And waste a lot of time writing about ephemera — as I did to some extent in the sixties.

SS: You have spent the last decade and a half publicly identified as "Buddhist student Allen Ginsberg," but you were once regarded as one of the most articulate exponents of psychedelics as a means of personal, if not global, transformation. How do you view the Reagan administration's attempts to police consciousness via urine tests and sobriety checkpoints?

AG: All scientific research on LSD has been stopped, except for very few projects done under the military, and that's a major catastrophe for human mind engineering and scientific advancement and psychology. The heroin problem stands as it always was: a conspiracy by heroin police, narcotics bureaus, their bureaucracies and budgets — with their working relation with Cosa Nostra and organized crime in maintaining a black market and high prices and sales under the desk — as well as regular organized crime dope laundry money, and *that* whole network extends from the White House to the Vatican. Contras — White House — Vatican. So the whole public approach by Reagan is just complete hypocrisy.

I've changed my mind about the relationship between acid and neurosis — it seems to me that acid can lead to some kind of breakdowns maybe. So that people should be prepared with meditation, before they take acid. There should be an educational program to cultivate meditative practice and techniques, so that when people get high on acid and get into bum trips they can switch their minds, easily — and there are ways of doing it, very simple. But nobody is doing mass training in that, and it might be interesting for high school kids. It's like — give junkies needles, give kids condoms if they're gonna screw so they don't get AIDS. If they're gonna try acid — which is probably good for an intelligent kid — they should also be prepared with some techniques in meditation, so that they can switch their attention from bum trips back to their breath, and to the current space around them.

So I think in the sixties I wasn't prepared to deal with acid casualties from the point of view of a reliable technique for avoiding those casualties.

SS: AIDS is not mentioned in *White Shroud.*

AG: No. I've had a couple of tests for myself for AIDS, and apparently have come out negative. *Maybe* been saved by my preference for straight kids. And I haven't met too many people that've had direct AIDS horrorshow — haven't avoided it exactly, it's just that I move in funny circles and I don't live in the Castro. But it's affected my sex life a lot.

I use condoms now and do safe sex, and I'm very hesitant to blow somebody and take their sperm unless I know them real well and know their history, and they've been tested. And even then — even friends that I think are safe, I don't think I would fuck them without a condom or be screwed without a condom — at the moment.

I've somewhat exhausted my aggressive grasping for constantly getting laid. I seem to lay off — relax a little bit more, want a quiet night at home working, more than running around urgent. It's added another element of — let's say *discouragement* of the idea of going out and trying to find new meat. Or more hesitant to try and put the make on students, simply because it's another barrier to go through — to explain to them that I've been tested and I know how to do safe sex — or, you know? Certainly there are a few people who I wanted to make out with who were worried about AIDS — who otherwise, maybe in another generation, might've been willing to swing to see what it was like.

I imagine in the next year I'd want to get into more contact with the actual AIDS clinics and people involved. At the moment I'm having hypertension from stress of doing too many things at once. So it's like taking on another activity. I'm sort of waiting for it to happen naturally. I've raised money for them but haven't had any real direct contact with people suffering.

SS: What is the state of your health currently?

AG: I have reactive hypoglycemia and arrhythmia of the heart, mainly due to overwork. Like I was up 'til seven this morning, eight-nine o'clock the night before trying to finish little projects. So, I've gotta change my life! Stop doing so many things. 'Cause right now I'm involved in poetry, photography, and music. And I've got this full-time job as a professor.

I've cut down on traveling and reading, and been hyperactive in publishing books: from *Collected Poems* to new *White Shroud* poems to *Howl* book, all in three years. It's actually broken my health a bit, and I have to start meditating more and do more t'ai chi. And control my diet. I have just this little office and one secretary — too many things going on, too much paper going over my desk.

Now we've located all my old journals. They've been typed and they're going to be edited. Following that, Bob Rosenthal is editing selected essays. Then Barry Miles is doing a biography of me, and will then be

Breakfast a decade at this kitchen window, now August 18, 1984, I focused on the raindrops on the clothesline
Allen Ginsberg

editing selected correspondence, and there's another book of selected interviews. In a way it's kind of — dismaying — because I'm trapped with things I've already done. My time is taken up *framing* things. If I were really free, I'd have a much happier time. It's kind of a *drag* to be so well known because it's *work*.

The thing I enjoy most at the moment, aside from writing poems, just poems, is photography; and I always like to sing. Now for the first time I have complete opportunity to do all of them — somebody will fund records, somebody will put out for the photography books — a good publisher to put out big books, journals and anything I want to print — but the more opportunity there is the more things I can think of to do, and it gets really hyperactive, workaholic. So I'm coming up against my own karma that way — what is the limit of what I want to do — what do I *most* want to do before I kick the bucket.

About a month ago one doctor told me I had heart trouble, and should carry nitroglycerine around. Turned out he was wrong, but it was a good opportunity to review the time I have left to figure out what is it I find most essential. And the thing I found most essential was doing nothing. Waiting for the Muse. Maybe with a camera. With a Leica.

SS: How do you feel about death?

AG: Well, I don't know anything about it. I never died before that I can remember. The deepest feeling I have is of the poignancy of having to say goodbye to everything — that I like so much. But I seem to be doing that inch-by-inch. I told you about the slight loosening of anxiety about sex — in addition to which I'm taking high blood pressure pills which cuts down sexual activity. Now, I've had to give up — for hypoglycemia — I have to say, bid farewell forever to matzo balls! To —

SS: Knishes?

AG: Challah! To knishes — potato knishes, to potatoes boiled, mashed, fried — borscht I can't take because I have gout and kidney stones and borscht has calcium oxalate. I can't eat pasta, and I can't eat good old black bread, rye bread or toast much, or English muffins, Danish pastry, pies, cakes —

SS: Onion rolls?

AG: Onion rolls, bagels, farewell! As well as I can't eat red meat any more so rare that I can sink my teeth into a big juicy pastrami sandwich or corned beef or roast beef — I'm slowly gravitating towards celery and cucumbers and endives and lettuce and olive oil and lemon juice and maybe a lil' kasha which has less starch and complex carbohydrates.

No more candy no more soda no more cranberry juice no more orange juice hardly, just oranges themselves. So I'm *already* having all these little deaths.

But *then* you begin to explore the texture of what you eat — the texture of your environment. For instance — for forty years I always had salt with my soft-boiled eggs, and then I was told no more salt for high blood pressure; and I really developed a taste for soft-boiled eggs without salt. Then for five years, since a Tibetan doctor told me to drink a glass of lemon juice with hot water every morning, I've had that with honey. I had to give up honey a month ago, and I suddenly discovered the lemon juice is sweet in itself! Funny explorations that I've been making — is death so bad? Is saying goodbye to matzo balls, is that so bad? Or bagels — or sucking semen directly into my gut —

Today I got up and — WHAT CAN I EAT? So what I did was I made a giant salad for breakfast. Crunching big juicy lettuce. So. What else we got?

SS: One of the revelations of the annotated *Howl,* for me, was the amount of material that was eventually rejected. It is contrary to the public image of you as not revising to realize that *Howl* was the product of a rigorous selection process. Did you use such a process in subsequent compositions, or change habits or strategy?

AG: Howl was a special case, of a structure that was so *good* it needed perfection. It looks like a lot of revision and a lot of revision it is, of little details and some addition and all that — nonetheless the main structure of *Howl* is right there in the first draft, and the most interesting phrasing. Like, I think "hydrogen jukebox" is there to begin with, and "Moloch whose name is the Mind" — maybe it came in somewhere early — "smokestacks and antennae crown the cities."

So, it's just a question of cleaning it up and pushing it into shape. The reason I kept insisting that *Howl* was spontaneous — though it's not at all — is that the original impulse of the original writing *was* a spontaneous momentary burst. And I think that has to be respected. Though I perhaps *over*-emphasized the nonrevised aspect of it — lied about it outright and bald-faced to John Ciardi when he called me up in Paterson in 1958 and said did I revise it and I said, "No — not at all." It certainly was cleaned up a lot.

The most interesting compositional is the four pages of improvisation in the Moloch thing. That's actually pretty good and funny. You know, like jamming —

SS: "Moloch whose cock is the Washington Monument."

AG: Yes. Now, "Moloch whose cock is the Washington Monument" as an image is not so good — as a *sound* there's a very good DA dat da Dat da da DA-DA-DA, DA-DA-DA! It's got good syncopation. The reason I kept that through many drafts was it was just — good sound. And also maybe the possibility of a kind of national image. But it's too garish. It's too obvious a trip. Also, why insult the Washington Monument?

But that section of improvisations really would be good study for a young poet to see how BAD you can get, but how loose you can get, and how GOOD it is to get bad and loose and genius-like. You could get something out of it.

I think I just needed to allow *any* thought to come through — any embarassing thing — and not worry about writing down things that were stupid. Allow that — because you can never tell what's gonna be stupid later on. I couldn't satisfy Kerouac's very strict freestyle nonrevision. And he's given a great example — of his prose and *Mexico City Blues* — of doing it.

SS: Not stepping backwards.

AG: Yeah — not changing anything. The mind got accustomed to his work, right away. It was perfect — as is. I didn't think mine was perfect as is.

It's a how-to book. How to write *Howl.* Or how to go about this style of poetry. I always wanted to explain that, and never had the chance. 'Cause a lot of people are interested in the poem and a lot of people write in that style or learn something from it — so this is a chance to really, *really* explain in a way that other people can make use of the methods that I inherited and developed.

SS: That wouldn't necessarily result in a Ginsbergian —

AG: No, it would result in a genre of poetry that's common 20th-century heroic international style from Whitman, Apollinaire, and others. But it would be applied individually. The method is simply liberation of the imagination, and a certain intelligence and choice of what you want to include.

I guess the best lesson is seeing the quality of the things that I included and the vulgarity of the things that I excluded — 'cause a lot of people write vulgar *Howls.* There's not enough refinement. Thinking that the *freedom* is the whole point and not the refinement part also.

SS: You have said all along that the personal — if expressed with particularity — is archetypal. However, in many other poets' work, the personal remains personal and does not become archetypal.

AG: I think you'll find that it isn't personal, it's generic — that people do generalizations and don't get down to *specific observation of detail,* which would then make it interesting. Anything that somebody really sees, is able to notate precisely, *of course* it's interesting.

It's when they don't see something, but just make a general curse a la Bukowski, or what they think I'm doing — you know, "Fled from the demands of the middle class down the alleyways of high-cost supermarkets . . . " That's not interesting. What are the ways of the middle class you're talking about? Can you particularize and specify what it is you're referring to — then somebody else can find it. Offer me a glimpse of somebody else's life. ■

AUTOGEDDON

AN EXCERPT FROM THE EPIC POEM

BY
HEATHCOTE WILLIAMS

Heathcote Williams, whose last appearance in these pages was "Elephants" (CQ #41), has thought long and hard about the automobile. "The car evicts the genius loci of every place it pervades, in the dispiriting cause of turning the whole world into an interconnected no-place-at-all," he writes from his home in England. Williams' latest project, along the same lines as "Elephants," is called Whale Nation. *—Sallie Tisdale*

In 1885 Karl Benz constructed the first automobile.
It had three wheels, like an invalid car,
And ran on alcohol, like many drivers.

Since then about seventeen million people have been
killed by them
In an undeclared war;
And the whole of the rest of the world is in danger
of being run over
Due to squabbles about their oil.

If an alien was to hover a few hundred yards above the planet
It could be forgiven for thinking
That cars were the dominant life-form,
And that human beings were a kind of ambulatory fuel cell:
Injected when the car wished to move off,
And ejected when they were spent.

Not one huckstering copy-writer —
And they're only a sheet of Letraset away
From badlands ballyhoo merchants spiking sugar
with silver-sand
Or dying sparrows yellow and selling them as canaries —
Ever sees fit to mention that the automobile,
Even that moving Pantheon, the Rolls,
Doubles your heart-beat on entry,
And transforms your psycho-galvanic skin response
To set the needles shivering on any lie detector.

From the moment you settle comfortably behind the wheel —
Your pelvis fondled by replica flesh panting with static —
It increases stress readings, poultices the ductless glands,
Slowly marinates the body of even the most 'experienced'
driver with adreno-toxins,
Noisily generates a wide range of cardio-vascular pressures,
As well as doubling up as a dinky orgone-accumulator
stimulating trash sexuality.

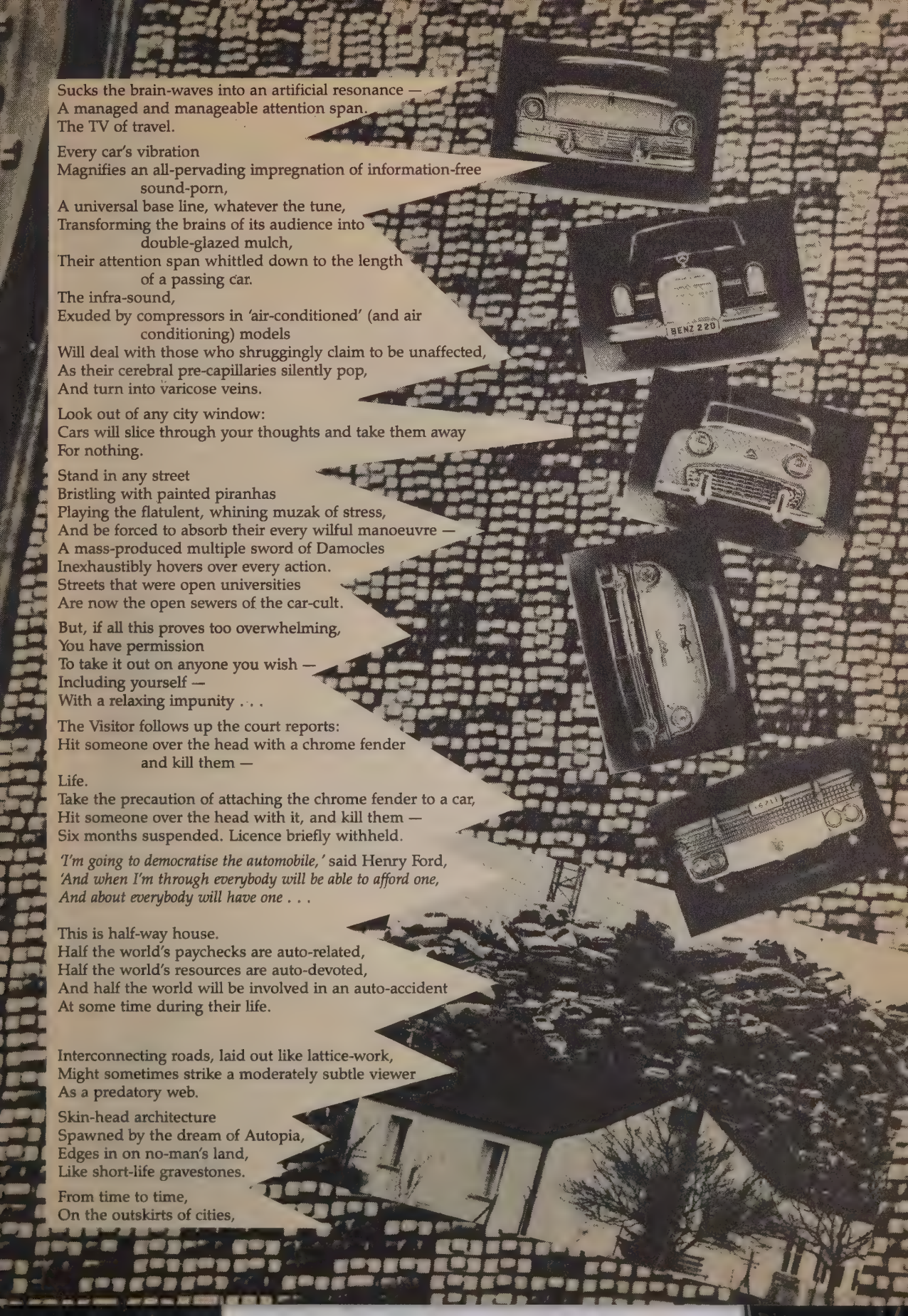
Tides of blood and water in the body
Are magi-mixed, as if there was a permanent full moon.
The car is a portable mistral
Whipping up sumps of duff ions,
And moving them along in a packet of pre-storm tension.

'Oh we had such an awful journey,
I feel completely drained.
Now what did you want to talk to us about?
My concentration's utterly shot.
Why did we come?

Further specifications:

The machine re-vamps the energy patterns of the driver,
Bearing only a scanty relation to the work put into it:
'Whoops, did we do something then?
Couldn't have. We'd have felt it.

Like television,
The peculiar rhythm of the car



Sucks the brain-waves into an artificial resonance —
A managed and manageable attention span.
The TV of travel.

Every car's vibration
Magnifies an all-pervading impregnation of information-free
sound-porn,
A universal base line, whatever the tune,
Transforming the brains of its audience into
double-glazed mulch,
Their attention span whittled down to the length
of a passing car.
The infra-sound,
Exuded by compressors in 'air-conditioned' (and air
conditioning) models
Will deal with those who shruggingly claim to be unaffected,
As their cerebral pre-capillaries silently pop,
And turn into varicose veins.

Look out of any city window:
Cars will slice through your thoughts and take them away
For nothing.

Stand in any street
Bristling with painted piranhas
Playing the flatulent, whining muzak of stress,
And be forced to absorb their every wilful manoeuvre —
A mass-produced multiple sword of Damocles
Inexhaustibly hovers over every action.
Streets that were open universities
Are now the open sewers of the car-cult.

But, if all this proves too overwhelming,
You have permission
To take it out on anyone you wish —
Including yourself —
With a relaxing impunity . . .

The Visitor follows up the court reports:
Hit someone over the head with a chrome fender
and kill them —
Life.
Take the precaution of attaching the chrome fender to a car,
Hit someone over the head with it, and kill them —
Six months suspended. Licence briefly withheld.

'I'm going to democratise the automobile,' said Henry Ford,
'And when I'm through everybody will be able to afford one,
And about everybody will have one . . .

This is half-way house.
Half the world's paychecks are auto-related,
Half the world's resources are auto-devoted,
And half the world will be involved in an auto-accident
At some time during their life.

Interconnecting roads, laid out like lattice-work,
Might sometimes strike a moderately subtle viewer
As a predatory web.

Skin-head architecture
Spawned by the dream of Autopia,
Edges in on no-man's land,
Like short-life gravestones.

From time to time,
On the outskirts of cities,

Wreckers' yards erect massive mausoleums of mouldering cars,
No longer worth requisitioning,
Picked fairly clean of their inhabitants,
Like Parsee Towers of Silence.

Oil.
From the Sanskrit root *-il*, light, illumination.
And *petr*, Peter, the rock.

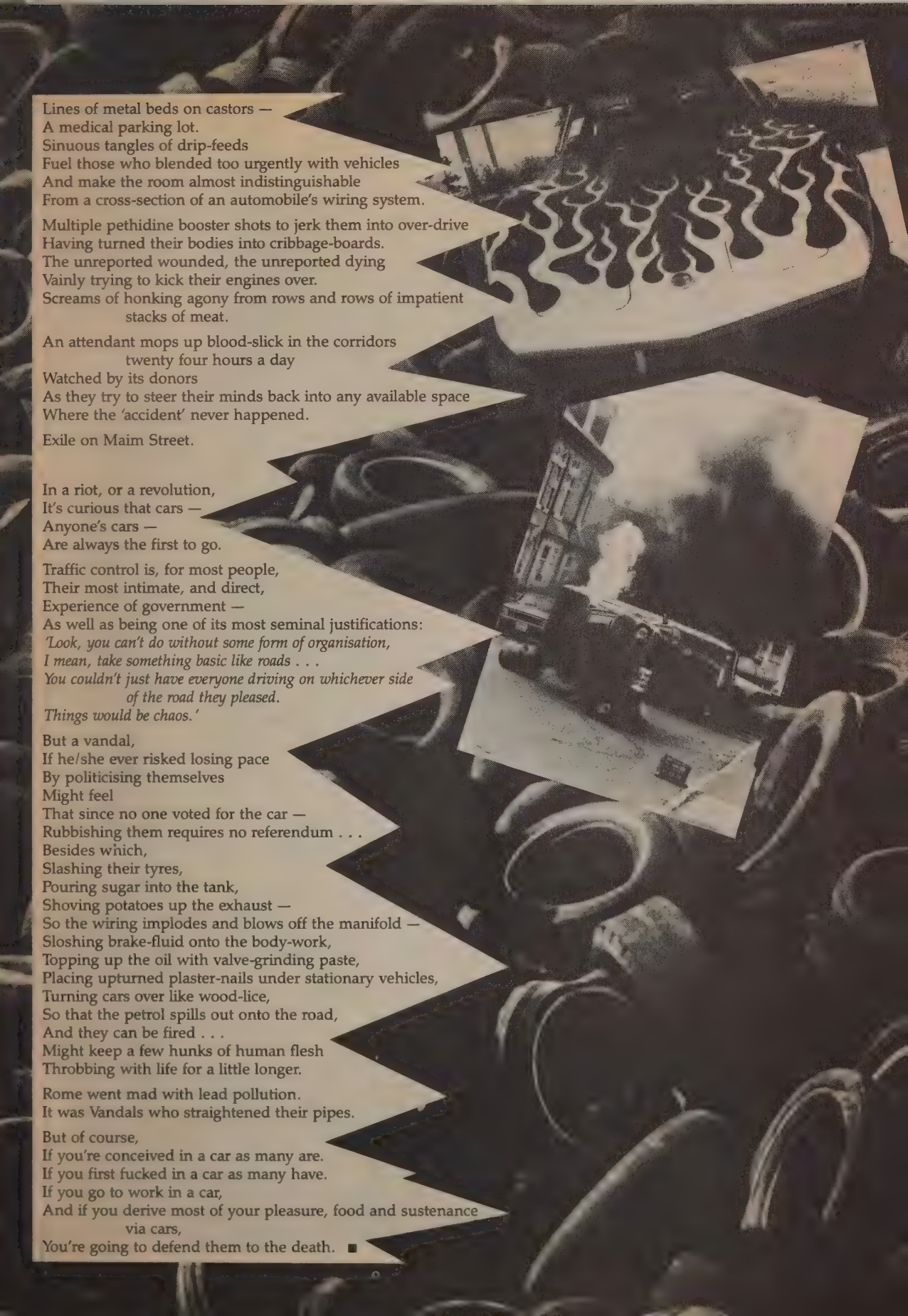
Thus, petrol is — remarkably — light from the rock.
Oil,
Which, if the Chinese geomantics are right,
And this earth is a living organism
(And the atmosphere is obviously its own breath),
Could be its digestive juices,
Its cerebro-spinal fluid —
Or even its bile —
And it may one day over-react
To being caricatured as a handy Molotov cocktail,
Needled with two million bore-holes,
By oil spivs.

Oil,
The liquefied,
If not spiritualised,
Transmutation of extinct lives:
Primordial kelp, crustacea, foraminifera,
Plankton, unicellular diatoms, marine protozoa . . .
The haemins and lipids of dinosaurs
And unknown mammals from the Jurassic —
Whose first extinction was clearly not enough
For this consumer version of ancestor worship.

Oil,
A secular sacrament
Whose price is regarded as essential to keep as low as possible,
Perhaps to divert attention from its true value,
And which, if the gurus of Exxon, Texaco, BP
and the 'Seven Sisters' are correct
Is most properly exploited
When as many people as possible
Are incinerating as much of it as they can
For as trivial a reason as they can find,
To keep a continuous carousel of consumer offal on the move —
In an alfresco gas chamber.

More than twice the number in the death-camps,
A hundred and thirty times the kill at Hiroshima,
Eight times the count in Korea,
Two hundred and thirty Vietnams,
Eight thousand five hundred Ulsters . . .
The Hundred Years War in a week;
The Crusades in under thirty seconds.
A Black Death with bubonic rats on wheels,
A quarter of a million 'auto-fatalities' a year —
The humdrum holocaust —
The fast-food — junk-death — road-show.

Take any accident ward
Trying to service a few de-stocked slices
From the 250,000 a year
Wheeled in on stiff-scoops
To brain and body garages
By whistling ambulance men.



Lines of metal beds on castors —
A medical parking lot.
Sinuous tangles of drip-feeds
Fuel those who blended too urgently with vehicles
And make the room almost indistinguishable
From a cross-section of an automobile's wiring system.

Multiple pethidine booster shots to jerk them into over-drive
Having turned their bodies into cribbage-boards.
The unreported wounded, the unreported dying
Vainly trying to kick their engines over.
Screams of honking agony from rows and rows of impatient
stacks of meat.

An attendant mops up blood-slick in the corridors
twenty four hours a day
Watched by its donors
As they try to steer their minds back into any available space
Where the 'accident' never happened.

Exile on Maim Street.

In a riot, or a revolution,
It's curious that cars —
Anyone's cars —
Are always the first to go.

Traffic control is, for most people,
Their most intimate, and direct,
Experience of government —
As well as being one of its most seminal justifications:
'Look, you can't do without some form of organisation,
I mean, take something basic like roads . . .
You couldn't just have everyone driving on whichever side
of the road they pleased.
Things would be chaos.'

But a vandal,
If he/she ever risked losing pace
By politicising themselves
Might feel
That since no one voted for the car —
Rubbishing them requires no referendum . . .
Besides which,
Slashing their tyres,
Pouring sugar into the tank,
Shoving potatoes up the exhaust —
So the wiring implodes and blows off the manifold —
Sloshing brake-fluid onto the body-work,
Topping up the oil with valve-grinding paste,
Placing upturned plaster-nails under stationary vehicles,
Turning cars over like wood-lice,
So that the petrol spills out onto the road,
And they can be fired . . .
Might keep a few hunks of human flesh
Throbbing with life for a little longer.

Rome went mad with lead pollution.
It was Vandals who straightened their pipes.

But of course,
If you're conceived in a car as many are.
If you first fucked in a car as many have.
If you go to work in a car,
And if you derive most of your pleasure, food and sustenance
via cars,
You're going to defend them to the death. ■

B-BALL

IN WHICH A COACH AND A FEW SPECIAL PLAYERS FIND HAPPINESS THROUGH CHEATING

Ron Jones is a basketball coach, husband, father, and writer — sometimes in that order. He's a longtime WER *contributor, and a helluva nice guy. Copies of the entire book* B-Ball *can be ordered by sending $4 per copy to: Ron Jones, 1201 Stanyan Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Free copies are available to teams that dare play the basketball team that has never lost a game.*
—Sallie Tisdale

EXCERPTS FROM A SELF-PUBLISHED BOOK.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RON JONES

I COUNTED TO FOUR. THEN YELLED, "Everyone over here!" In calling the first San Francisco Special Olympic Basketball practice I expected an army of hopefuls. Standing with one foot on a bag bulging with basketballs I envisioned a team running Oklahomas, flying three at a time down the floor in a fast break drill, learning to play the pressure defense, cut off the baseline . . . instead I welcomed the team to its first practice and counted to four. Four players bounced up and down in front of me waiting for the season to begin. Not exactly what I expected. Or wanted.

I must admit a lifelong affair with basketball. As the shortest kid in the world, or at least the sixth grade, my early experience with basketball was one of quickness and shots fired from all manner of places. To compensate for the lack of long legs and arms, I figured if I practiced longer than anyone else I would be successful. Or at least seen by

the coach. If that didn't work I had several theories for stretching the body. The practice worked better than being pulled apart by my two best friends or hanging from the refrigerator door.

As that "not too tall" player in high school and college I not only played the game but swallowed it. When people asked what I did, I answered "basketball." I couldn't wait to sneak into the gym on Saturday mornings. I loved everything about the game. The mystery of not being able to miss a shot. And then throwing up a basketball and missing everything but the wall. The sound of squeaking high tops and a drumming ball against a mirror floor. Mythical rules like stopping the dribbler and never undercutting an opponent in the air. Skins of victory hanging in every gym. Private memories of great plays and legends. Playground bums. Benneys. Earl the Pearl. And a guy named Leamons.

As a high school basketball coach, I traded in my theories about getting taller and getting into locked gyms for getting wins. I relished all the possibilities for a coach to control the rhythm and outcome of a game. The match-ups. The presses that speed up the game. The ball control of a passing game. Attitudes that influence the will to win. Although I knew a lot more about the game, the fundamental appeal of winning dominated every practice and was the center of every season.

As a player and a coach, everything is dedicated toward one event. *Winning.* The desire to win is an opiate that is never satisfied. It creeps into your hands before each shot. Enters your dreams before each tip-off. The optimism of being a winner is always there. At the end of the game the one thing that justifies all your hard work and sacrifice is winning. In the preparation for the next game the one thing that drives you is the thought of winning. Like the measure of justice, winning not only determines individual and team success but moral success. To win, you play fair and hard. You never play an injured athlete or seek the injury of an opponent. You never insult the game or an opposing team. You appreciate the physical and mental tests afforded by the game. The opportunity to share a common experience with fellow players. To behave well under pressure. To know life's secret, the game's secret, that competition requires a worthy opponent and the desire to play again and again. That if you beat your opponent to the point of surrender then the game ends. That playing and playing well is the ultimate goal. *Maybe that's why I pursue this game throughout my life — it's the challenge to do things right and to sometimes win.*

Michael Rice and Gary Amber

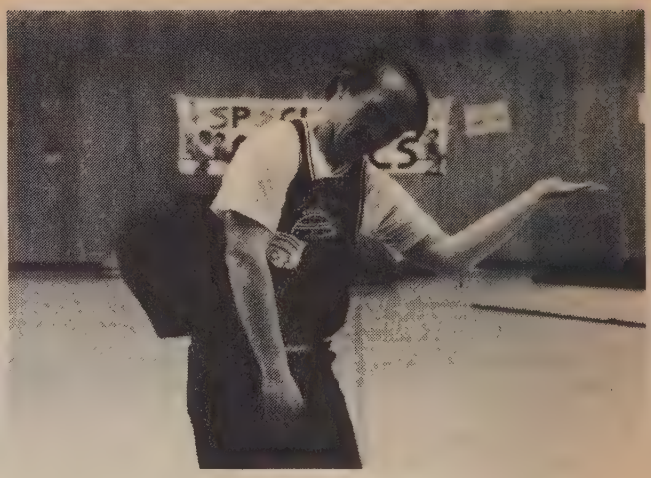
Every time he hit the word "ready" the other players echoed, "Yeah!"

As I examined the four Special Olympic athletes in front of me, it was apparent that for the first time in my life I might be a part of a team that can find nobody to play. It was alarmingly evident that these athletes might not even hold a basketball, much less develop skills of dribbling, passing, and shooting. My mind began to tear up plans for fast break drills or even a lay-up drill. I decided it best to simply look at each athlete and try to find a place to begin.

Michael Rice was tall with a bell-shaped body and a bushy goatee. At six-foot-four or so, he was the tallest, perhaps a center. He stood facing me with his feet spread apart and his hand at his sides in an "I didn't take it" posture. He was grinning and explaining, "Mr. Jones, we're ready!" His voice had a sing-song quality, each word bubbling with enthusiasm and ending in a toothless smile. He didn't mind repeating himself. Every time he hit the word "ready" the other players echoed, *"Yeah!"* They were all grinning. I felt like I was inspecting a row of new cars. Short cars. With smiling grills. Lots of teeth were missing. It didn't seem to bother them. "Mr. Jones, we're ready!" *"Yeah."*

Vinh Cuong Du: We're Number Four!!!

Joe Asaro tiptoed in the air with his "yeah." I noticed one arm didn't work. It was crooked and waved in the air like an errant wand. For a second he seemed like a tightrope walker pawing at the space around him. Then in



Ed Guyette: Hidden Ball Tricks #1 and #2

slow motion he gave out a guttural roar, listed to one side and toppled toward the floor. Leonette grabbed him, straightened him up, lifted him into the air with a bear hug and then replanted him back in a standing position. She nonchalantly accompanied her feat with some comforting words, "There you are Joey, you all right now?" Joey nodded. Their smiles collided.

Leonette Branham — now there is a player I can identify with. She is six feet tall and six feet wide at the shoulders. Rocking from one foot to the other she has the intense look and smile of Magic Johnson. I was imagining her as a power forward when she asked, "Can I get my uniform, now?" Before I could answer she was beginning a tug-of-war with her sweatshirt. She is a big-bosomed woman and I feared the sudden exposure. Her head bobbed up and down. She was trapped. Locked in a frantic twist of arms and material. I couldn't wait for the result of the Great Houdini Sweatshirt Escape. With a yank I pulled the sweatshirt down. Her head popped out of the neck opening like a cork out of a bottle. She was holding her breath. I tried to explain, "You, look, it's all right, you don't need a uniform, I don't have, you don't need a uniform for practice, this is just a practice." Leonette let out a gush of air and started walking away. "Where — " I looked at the group, then to the retreating giant. "Where are you going?" She answered, in a gallop, "To the bathroom, now."

I momentarily panicked. These athletes were my responsibility. What if they all just walked off and got lost? I couldn't follow all of them. I sure couldn't enter the girls' bathroom. My eyes followed Leonette as she disappeared behind the door marked Boys. Oh, great. I knocked on the door and yelled, "Leonette come on out, I'll show you — " Catching myself I concluded, "come on out when you are finished!" From behind the door I heard a muffled, "I'm all right now."

Confident that one person was accounted for, I turned to count the others. Michael and Joey had followed me. Michael took his Eiffel Tower stance and Joey tiptoed into him. Michael was still clattering about being ready as Joey drooled approval and stabbed his good fist into the air. He almost knocked Michael out. "Where's the other guy?" I asked. Michael and Joey pointed to the bench at the other end of the gym. Audwin Stansbury was sitting next to the woman playground director. He was smiling and she was signing something. I yelled for him to come over and was delighted by what I saw.

Audwin could run. I mean he was fast. He kinda ran sideways. His head turned one way to watch his lady friend while his body raced a thousand miles an hour in our direction. I assumed he'd stop in front of us but instead he just kept running in a graceful loop that took him all around the gym — past his newfound fan — and back to us. I kept waiting for him to stop. Audwin kept running. His eyes and smile seemed to get bigger with each lap around the gym. Each time he swooped past us he yelped for joy. Running wild he glided over the floor giving no attention to lines, my frantic gestures to him to stop, or even the idea that this was supposed to be basketball practice.

Finally I screamed, "Hey you, slow down!" I was angry but it's hard to chew out someone that is coming to a smiling stop and pressing a piece of paper into your hand. The paper had the name Mary followed by a telephone number. Audwin dipped his head toward the paper and mumbled. It sounded like he was saying "girl friend" but I wasn't sure. Michael became an instant interpreter. "Audie don't talk too good." I stared at Michael, the tiptoeing Joey, the bathroom door and the piece of paper. I began to feel like Alice in Basketball Land.

Michael warned, "Joey don't talk too good either, Joey isn't that so?" Like Audie, Joey let out a rumbling noise. Joey's noise had a definite intensity. His eyes

glared, imploring me to comprehend his staccato grunts. I guess I was frowning because Joey smiled. And so did Audwin. I had nothing but questions. Turning to Michael I asked, "How'd Audie, you call him Audie — " Michael pointed in a helpful way, "That's Audie, that's Joey." After a pause I tried again. "How'd Audie get that girl over there to give him her phone number, I mean I can't understand what he's saying." Michael answered, "Did he do that?" I shook my head in a fashion that said I guess so, maybe so, I don't know. Slamming the door behind her, Leonette joined us and declared, "I'm ready."

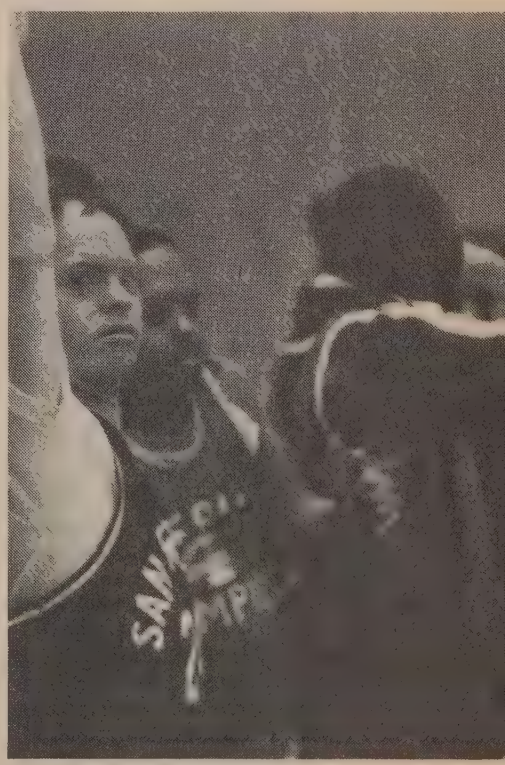
Everyone was smiling. We hadn't picked up a basketball or made a basket, or even warmed up — yet all four were grinning like they had just won the NBA. I was having doubts if we would field a team. If it were not for those smiles I think it would all end in a question mark. Those smiles. It was as if Michael, Joey, Audwin and Leonette knew something I was unaware of. I hoped they were right.

I blew my whistle as loud as I could. I mean if basketball was going to begin for the San Francisco Special Olympics Team it was going to start on time and it was going to be as instructive and disciplined as I could make it. I was going to teach this team everything I knew about the game. Teach them to love the game and play it well. And most important of all, teach them the feeling of winning. Following the sharp shrill of the whistle I commanded, "Everyone line up on the baseline for Oklahoma."

Four players instantly mingled around the array of lines on the floor. Michael tapped with his foot, "This one?" Leonette argued, "No, it's over here." Audie and Joey circled and ended up standing face to face on the free-throw line. I slowly took each player's hand and like a trailer rig I backed them into place on the baseline. It took me twenty minutes to get four players to stand on the same line and face the same direction. Everything I took for granted was suddenly in doubt. All the measuring sticks I had experienced in basketball suddenly didn't apply. I had gauged success by laps run, by free throws made, by rebounds, by assists, by take-aways . . . not by standing in line facing the same direction. I looked at the four players giggling with excitement over the fact that they were standing in line. Oh, well, I congratulated myself, they were almost facing the same direction. Not bad, I guess. It's just going to take forty-five years to learn a lay-up drill.

I started talking fast and loud — afraid if I slowed down Leonette would head for the bathroom or Joey would topple over. "Now you run down to the free throw line and back and then to the half court line and wait, *wait,* WAIT!" All four players took off in a wild dash. Only the wall at the far end of the gym stopped them. All four crashed into the wall, straightened themselves up and started giving each other high fives, low fives, and in-between fives. The celebration took another twenty minutes. In my mind I erased Oklahoma. Every exercise, every drill, every skill I had planned to teach would have to be rethought not only in terms of time it would take but if it could be accomplished at all.

I felt a nervous smile tingling through my mind and crinkling my face. It wasn't the expression of triumph or glee or even humor but one of curiosity and wonder. It was the smile of someone sitting in a canoe within the sight and sound of an approaching waterfall. Only this waterfall had



arms and legs and high fives all around. This waterfall was smiling at me and all I could do was smile back. I blew my whistle as if I knew what I was doing. As if I had some plan. I beckoned with my hand and yelled, *"Everyone over here!"* ►

Gary "Bogart" Amber

ON ONE OCCASION Joey was working on picking up and holding the basketball. A group of young players started hooting. Joey took the noise as a roar of encouragement. He bent over and with his good hand he rolled the ball over the toe of his shoe and slowly up his shoe laces and then against the space between his rail-like legs. Still in a crouch, Joey patiently pinned the ball in a "body pocket" between his chest and upraised knee. The fence sitters let out a roller-coaster yell as the ball balanced between Joey's arm, chest and leg. Joey tilted his head toward his cheering section and smiled.

I was about to shout for the onlookers to shut up when I realized they were betting on Joey's progress. Some were chanting for Joey to hold the ball, while others were oohing and ahhing at the amount of money being laid down. A tall skinny kid with sweatbands on his wrists, upper arms, ankles, and forehead was covering all the bets. "The man can do it, I've been watchin' him, it's in the eyes!"

Joey heard the compliment. He shook his head up and down. Gave his Edsel smile. Then jerked to a standing position and attempted to wave to his new friend. The ball dropped to the floor like a broken egg. Joey rubbed his fingers across his forehead in a gesture I interpreted to mean he wanted a sweatband. Then unperplexed by the noise around him he once again bent over and began the task of rolling the ball toward his feet. His sweat mentor was equal to the task. Sweat Man calmly dug into his headband and produced a roll of dollar bills. Once again the crescendo of hoots began. Once again money spilled onto the hardwood bench.

Now everyone in the gymnasium froze to watch Joey's effort to pick up and hold a basketball. I mentally bet on Joey. Joey is the most gutty and persistent person I know. If you have faith in his ability or ask him to do something, he will work on the endeavor until he's done it or you've tired of watching his repetitive attempts. I secretly smiled. His fans don't know it but Joey will try to hold that ball as long as they will watch his effort. In fact, he's probably been trying to hold a basketball for years. If Sweat Man wanted a miracle and fortune all he would have to do is wait. It might be an hour or days or years but if he waited Joey would do it!

A drum roll of excited voices greeted Joey's next attempt. Then there was a hush. Joey grimaced with determination. Michael felt the drama of the moment and offered encouragement. "You can do it Joey!" Leonette chimed in, "All right Joey, you can do it now . . . "Joey nodded but didn't look up or break his concentration. He curled the ball over his shoe and then began to inch it up his legs. Leonette applauded, "Good Joey, real good, you're doing real good, now." Sweat Man encouraged, "Easy man, almost." The ball nervously hung between Joey's forearm and his hip. If he squeezed too hard it would pop out. If he didn't apply enough pressure it would drop to the floor. With the ball safely pinned to his hip, Joey thought he had accomplished what the crowd was yelling about. So did I. Shouts from the betting public proved us both wrong.

"No man, you gotta hold the ball with your hands man, you gotta stand yourself up, not be lookin' at the floor!" "With your hands, gotta use your hands, that's the bet here!" Sweat Man didn't agree. "That's the bet, he's holdin' the ball . . . " It didn't matter. Joey had an idea of his own. I'm sure he thought he was going to please his audience. With a grunt that quieted the money argument Joey tried to tiptoe on his planted leg. I guess in his mind he was "standin' yourself up." He swayed on one foot. Then his body began to slowly gyrate like a top gaining its balance. Joey looked up and grinned. And the ball dropped to the floor.

"See's I told ya he can't do it, not standin' up — not holdin' the ball with his hands . . . " Sweat Man wasn't finished and he sure couldn't wait for the next exhibition. He confidently unfurled another roll of bills. Just as quickly money pounded onto the bench. Sweat Man eased his body upright and sauntered toward Joey. As he passed me he spoke from the corner of his mouth. "You got some tape man like in first aid or for holding up ankles." He dipped as he said the words holding up ankles. I pointed to the red metal box with the red cross stencil. Without hesitation or requesting permission Sweat Man opened the box. Like a magician finding a rabbit in a hat he pulled out the roll of adhesive. "Now this here is what I'm lookin' for."

Sweat Man took Joey's gnarled hands and began to wrap each finger. He left a fringe of tape on each finger that he doubled back and tested for its adhesiveness. Then he picked up the basketball and spun it on his thumb. Joey's eyes got rounder and rounder. And with the prying effort of Sweat Man, Joey's hand was opened wider and wider.

Both men smiled in triumph as Sweat Man placed the basketball in Joey's outstretched hand. The ball stuck to the tape so securely that Joey couldn't shake it off. There he was tiptoeing around the gym amazed at the sight of a basketball finally in his hands

and concerned that he might not be able to ever let it go.

Sweat Man's friends went wild with complaints, knee-slapping accolades and the pure enjoyment of witnessing Sweat Man create a solution that no white man could ever think of. Sweat Man pranced in a circle around Joey like a preacher that had just given legs to a man that cannot walk. In a way he had.

I had never thought about using tape to teach someone to hold a basketball but then I never had a player like Joey or a magician like Sweat Man. I looked at the tape on Joey's fingers and saw how his hand was struggling to free itself of the tape and the basketball. I took the ball but not the tape. "Joey this tape makes your fingers work, it's like an exercise machine." I had Joey make a fist. His hand clenched tight. "Now open your hand." Joey forced his hand open. "Joey I think I got a way to strengthen your hand so you can hold that ball on your own." Leonette bounced into our conversation, "Yea, Joey, you can do a hook shot and everything now!"

Nita Winter

YIN LING IS HERE!

Over the course of the past five years the mystery voice of Yin Ling has telephoned a thousand times, to announce, "This is Yin Ling I'm coming right away!" — Click — In trying to find his address or telephone number I discover: there is no Yin Ling on any Recreation Center roster — click — city telephone directory list — click — and the members of the Talking Conga Corps shrug *nada* at the mention of this mystery name. Perhaps it's a hoax. But more likely some homebound individual has stumbled upon my number. And there is a likelihood that every Thursday somewhere in the city, someone named Yin Ling is traveling across the city on a MUNI, trudging up some street, standing on a talking corner — constantly searching for the elusive basketball practice.

During practice I regularly catch myself glancing toward the closed gymnasium door. I realize I'm watching, waiting, and hoping for the resplendent entrance of someone named Yin Ling. I've heard his dreams so often. That hyperactive signal, "Hello, this is Yin Ling, you know me, I'm coming

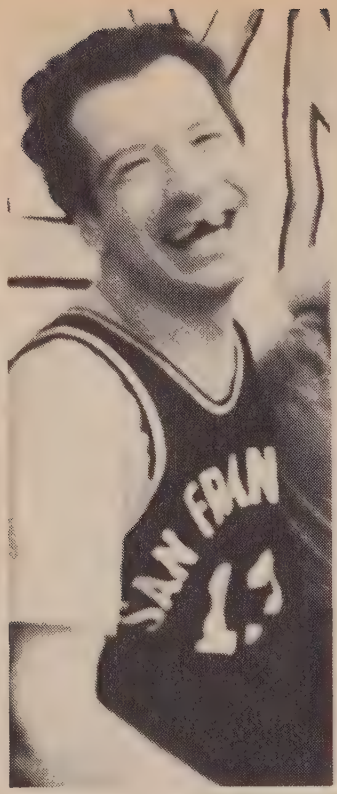
to practice today!" — click — No matter what I say, or how hard I try to stem this rush of excitement, the result is always the same — click — "This is me, Yin Ling, I got a new uniform for practice today!" — *click* —

So when the gym door opens and a young Chinese man walks confidently toward me I know at once — it's Yin Ling! Yin Ling is finally here! And he's dressed just like I expected. He's ready. He's got high tops and bright red sweats. I can't contain myself. "Hey Yin Ling, you've made it, all right!" The visitor turns away from my greeting and faces the closing door. Before it can click shut in walks another Yin Ling. And another. And then a dozen Yin Lings. They are all dressed alike. Red sweats. All about the same height. They cluster nervously at the entrance as my lookalike from the Chinese Consulate, Jian-She Cao enters and with a beaming smile proclaims — "Mr. Coach, we're ready to play you and your Special Olympic Team, like you said!"

Mr. Jian is brimming with pleasure. I'm stunned — "But you didn't telephone, or tell me you were coming and this is just a practice — " I swept my hand in the air toward my team that was gathering around me in awe of the red sweat invasion. Mr. Jian swept his in a similar fashion toward his team. "We are anxious to play you, you are the first to invite us to your gym, so we are here!" A film flashes into my head as I realize that Jian-She has the melon-shaped head and gurgling chuckle of Spencer Tracy. I unconsciously utter, "Guess who's coming to basketball?" Jian asks, "What?" I swallow a nervous laugh. "Are you going to stay for dinner?" "No, no," he replies, "just basketball."

The red-sweat team methodically begins to warm up. They attack the basketball with whiplike intensity. Each player charges the hoop and hooks the ball into the target. A rebounder snaps the ball from the basket and fires it to the next attacking player. Jian stands at courtside with his feet spread apart, his arms crossed over his chest, and the look of victory on his face. I wonder if I look like that? Then recognize I'm standing in the same posture watching my team. Only my team isn't cutting to the basket. They look like telephone poles cemented to the floor, immobilized by the red storm buzzing around the other basket.

Of course, some of my best



Joe Asaro

Leonette Branham and the Killer Squad

players aren't available. Daniel has found a girlfriend and shows up only for scheduled games. And Gary stands at courtside with "his" basketball that never leaves "his" arms. I am tempted to let Louie Louie play but he prefers his congas. Studying the red-clad players slicing to the basket and quick-handling the ball I feel like Custer looking for a place to hide. *"Oh hey, this is going to be murder and national pride's at stake!"* Those guys look serious.

It's strange how patriotism creeps to the surface in a national emergency. I had to think of something fast. Some secret weapon. Maybe two or three secret weapons. American know-how. Technology. A stealth bomb. A seven-foot player from Nigeria would do! Or a pre-game meal of Chicken McNuggets . . .

The Talking Conga Band senses the drama of this Titanic struggle. They begin hammering out a rhythmic crescendo.

dum dum dum dum
dum dum dum dum
dum . . .

It gets faster and faster, louder and louder. Our opponents seem impervious to the noise. And worst of all they seem intent on playing. And winning. They are lined up waiting for the tip-off.

The contest begins with Michael, Joey, and Leonette watching a Chinese player receive the tip-off and race for a basket. And then another Chinese player races for the basket. And another . . . and . . . another. I call time out.

Taking Joey by the hand I approach the huddled communists. "Hey, you," I grab the flinching hand of their tallest fastest player. Mr. Jian's eyes look like saucers. I explain, "Here's what we do here — I'm going to trade you our best player, Joey here, for your best player!" As I pull the Chinese player from their huddle Joey starts giving his new teammates the high five. They don't know what in the heck he's doing. Three of them simultaneously duck. Another throws up his hand in self-defense. Joey promptly slaps the waiting flat hand and smiles. A flurry of Chinese butterflies into the air along with confused scowls and jutting fingers. Joey and I are being pointed back to the American lines.

I try to explain, "It's a *trade,* we'll give your tall player here ten thousand dollars and throw in Joey Asaro, you get Joey, we get your center." Jian is beseeched with Chinese. I hear him explaining in Chinese and English, "Ten thousand — trade — no, no — traitor — ten thousand dollars?" The tall Chinese player stubbornly refuses to move as three of his comrades grab his jersey in defense of the Chinese way. I smile and let go of the potential star. "U.S. Special Olympic Team fails in its effort to abduct star Chinese athlete." Joey grunts agreement and joins the red team. He is grinning among his new comrades, clapping his good hand against his curled wrist. My last words to Joey are a compliment: "You guys don't know it but you've got our best player." Joey

self-consciously moans, then tiptoes to make himself seem taller.

"Okay," I talk to myself, "They've asked for it!" Jian follows me with questions, "We don't understand, is this Joey, is he ours?" I didn't answer. Jian continued to worry out loud. "What do we do with him?" I didn't answer. I was buried in thoughts about how to allow the Chinese to slow down and just enjoy the game, how to have fun — they were so grim, so fearful of losing. Jian continued his inquiry. "Do you play without a clock, do you play a ten-minute quarter, and where is our score, do you mark down the score?"

Jian's concerns followed me like a heat-seeking missile as I entered the gym closet and grabbed the electric scoreboard. Back on the gym floor Jian watched with an approving nod as I plugged in the board. Like a miniature carnival the tiny colored lights of the scoreboard twinkled into life declaring HOME — VISITOR —

TIME — DRINK COCA COLA. Jian tapped the light box and asked, "What is our score today?" I answered by pointing toward Joey trading his T-shirt for a red sweatshirt — "You won the first game!" "We won!" came a breath-releasing response. "Yea, you won — now let's try to play another game and this time let's try to get everyone to play and this time everyone can have a chance to win." *"Everyone,"* Jian asked quizzically, "You let everyone play, even the impaired?" *"Everyone,"* I grinned, "even the coach." I looked Jian in the eyes and repeated the Chinese sports anthem, "Friendship First — Competition Second." He grinned. "Teacher, coach — friendship first, yes."

I placed Larry Mason on the scoreboard. It's like putting Liberace on a church organ. Of all the athletes on the Special Olympic Team Larry is the only one to attend school. In fact he's always attending school. He currently goes to a local junior college. He wears the letter jacket and T-shirts of whatever school he's attending. He buys books. Carries the books around. And maybe even attends class. He just never graduates. Jian seems content that the most American-looking person in the gym has been assigned the scoreboard. "Perhaps there will be a ten-minute quarter now," he chuckles. I return the muffled smile. "Let's just see what happens." He is already shaking his head. "You Americans."

Before the second game can commence I put the team under Michael's tutelage and chase around the center looking for staff that want to play with us against the Chinese Communist Consulate Team. Several women from the pool staff join our cause. Two janitors gladly put aside their brooms for the epic conflict. Humming the theme song from *The Magnificent Seven* one of our van drivers puts on his tennis shoes. Our music and drama specialist, a red-haired woman with a saxophone, hears the call. America's best are assembling in the gym. The Talking Conga Corps put down their drums. *This is war!*

The red tide once again readies for the tip-off. Only this time they apprehensively bounce up and down and stare in wonderment at the players surrounding them. They don't know why Joey is cheering for them. Or why we have women in the game and they are playing in latex bathing suits and no shoes. And one of our players is carrying a saxophone. And two are speaking frenetic Spanish. And our Conga Drummer in the wheelchair is talking to a basketball. And it seems to be talking back.

With the Talking Basketball thrown into the air the second game begins. Once again the red team sweeps down the floor and scores. And does it again and again. And Again. This doesn't stop us. We continue to press on. Looking for a shot, any shot. Taking every opportunity to toot on the saxophone. They score. We send in more players. They score. We throw in an extra basketball. They score. We struggle to get the kid with the talking basketball into a position where he can drop the ball into the closest ash can. They score. We're wearing them down. They score.

I blast a whistle and yell dramatically, "Foul!" Everything comes to a frozen halt. "Two shots against the red team 'cause they're wearing red!" Half the red team giggles. The other half tells them to be quiet. I gently hand the ball to the kid in the wheelchair and push him over to a garbage can. The janitor proudly holds the can at an angle. And the kid trickles the ball into the trash. "Ya hoo!" We score. They call time out. Our saxophone player revs into "On Wisconsin."

Jian's team is in a state of shock. "What are you doing?" he asks pointing to the trash can, the woman saxophone player, the scantily clad aquatics staff, the sight of Joey clapping for the red team only to fall over and require the Chinese to collectively straighten him, the scoreboard . . . Jian settles his attention on the scoreboard. "Look, it's still moving! The numbers keep changing, your man there just sits turning the dials, one moment there are two minutes to play, then suddenly twenty-two minutes!" "Oh, that's Larry," I offer without apology. Jian wouldn't let me continue. Still jabbing his finger at the scoreboard he argues, "Look there it goes, the score it also keeps changing — thirty-three, thirty-four, sixteen, three, now it's eight to three — he just keeps twisting the dials!"

Jian took a deep breath. "How do you know who's winning?" I smiled. "I don't!" "Don't?" he implored. I tried to answer. "I don't know who's winning — it's more important to note who's playing!" Jian studied me and then without saying a word retreated to his team and clutched them into a tight circle. From the center of this red bundle he stuck out his head and motioned for Joey to join them. *Joey Asaro became the first Special Olympics athlete to play basketball for the People's Republic of China.* ►

Joe Asaro and Rose Busset

As I whistled for the game to continue, it changed in front of my eyes. The old man that had been introduced to me as the Consulate General was surprisingly playing in a new sweatshirt. He hobbled up and down the floor. A fellow player walked at his side. Another teammate cleared a loose ball and proudly placed it in the hands of the older player. We cleared a path as the older man walked to the hoop and threw up a shot that hit the bottom of the backboard. The entire Chinese Communist team, including one Joe Asaro, yelled bravo and clapped the old man's back in salute. Our saxophone player began playing "On Wisconsin!" Players from both sides began marching around as the old man strutted from the floor to a waiting bench.

Everyone felt alive and a part of the game. There was still the opportunity to race up and down the floor and *"take"* a shot — but now there was also the opportunity and obligation to *"give"* a shot. *It was all right to be intense one moment and silly the next. To have fun. To practice magic without tricks. A natural magic. In which all ages and truths can celebrate the joy of being together. Playing.*

The scoreboard never did signal the end of the game or even the accurate totals of points. It didn't matter. The contest came to a natural conclusion when we gathered around the center circle and counted in at least three languages and one honking saxophone — "ten, nine, eight . . . " By the end of our countdown all the players were hugging each other, trading T-shirts, and shaking with joy. Jian uncharacteristically threw his arm around me. *"You have a great team here, they are real heroes — they are heroes of the heart!"* "You're not bad yourself, you know." I gestured with a dip of my head toward several Chinese players whistling "On Wisconsin." They were trying to teach Joey how to whistle.

Jian was elated by the spectacle of friendship. "When you come to China we will" — he caught himself and laughed out loud — "We will learn to cheat, like you!" I chuckled, "Can I bring my scorekeeper?" Jian looked at me with a sudden seriousness: *"Bring Joey!"* ■

Coach Ron Jones: the only coach in the NBAWCAACACA with a tuxedo.

The Temple of Baseball

What is it about baseball that makes writers so eager to expound on it? Is it the beauty of the game itself, the hold it exerts in the American psyche, or a compensation for major-league careers never realized? Whatever it is, there has been so much great prose created on that sport that many lifelong literary types first cut their teeth on baseball anthologies.

The Temple of Baseball *is a quirky collection well suited to poetry and fiction lovers who stretch their minds as well as their legs in the seventh inning. Though it acknowledges some well-worn chestnuts (Updike's "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu"), it is heavier on the hip scribes of the beat era and the Black Mountain school. Which may be surprising to some, but seems to me only further evidence that you're never too cool to love baseball. —Steven Levy*

The Temple of Baseball
Richard Grossinger, Editor
1985; 252 pp.
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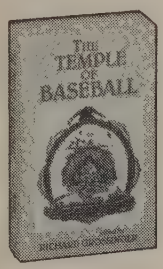
or Whole Earth Access



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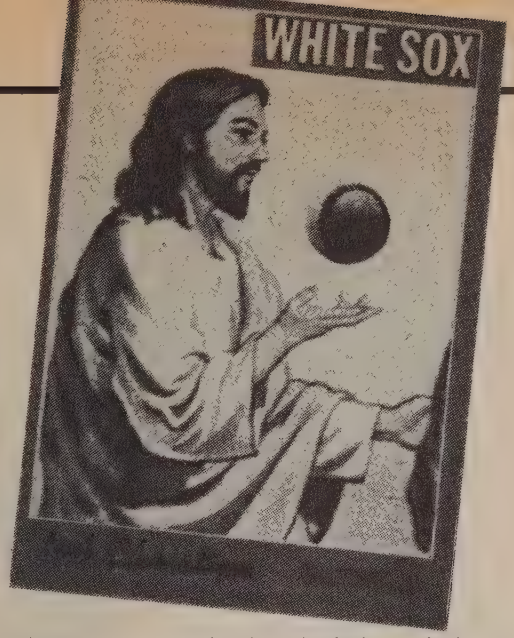
Men on first and second no outs, hard hit ball to shortstop, you notice the runner at second has had to wait until the ball passes him before advancing to third, you come across second for the flip from short for one out, then fire to *third base* yelling "Tag him!" your throw just misses runner's back, is caught, runner runs into the glove double play. *—Geoffrey Young*

•

This was in Virginia. That first year I was just an assistant coach. "How come there aren't any black kids playing ball in this league?" I said.

"What are you trying to do," they said, "start some kind of a crusade?"



The next year I was a head coach. The league had city-wide tryouts. "When I draft a black ballplayer," I said, "Which one of you is going to burn a cross on my lawn?"

"What do you think we are, anyway," they said.

I waited until the last round to see if anybody else would do it.

"Clarence Williams," I said. "I draft Clarence Williams." They didn't say anything for a short minute.

"He's *colored*," one of them said.

"He looked like a ballplayer to me," I said.

You better hope to hell you know what you're doing," another said.

"He didn't look to me like the only black kid at those tryouts who could play ball in this league," I said.

"We don't want to get too many," they said.
—James B. Carothers

Stories

Baseball's role in Nicaraguan life before the Sandinista revolution is just one theme in this collection of short stories by Sergio Ramirez. He is his country's leading prose writer and in 1984 was also elected Nicaragua's vice president.

Ramirez is a fine and varied storyteller. His stories, all but two written before the 1979 revolution, provide a multifaceted picture of the people and institutions of Nicaragua struggling to come to reasonable terms with the yanqui culture so ubiquitous in twentieth-century Central America.

Readers International is a subscriber series of novels and short stories, published six times a year in clothbound editions. (Some titles are later issued in paperback for sale in bookstores.) Their books come from all parts of the world, and share the attribute that they were, at least originally, suppressed in their native countries.
—Keith Jordan

•

The guard stood to one side to let him out of the cell. "Walk, don't talk," he snapped, jabbing him in the ribs with the rifle. The man flinched at the cold metal.

They emerged into the yard. Down by the far wall, the leaves of almond trees glittered in the moonlight. It was midnight, and the slaughtering of animals had begun in the next-door abattoir. The breeze carried a smell of blood and dung.

What a perfect field for baseball! The prisoners must make up teams to play, or take on the off-duty guards. The dugout would be the wall, which left about three hundred and fifty feet from home plate to centerfield. You'd have to field a hit from there running backwards toward the almond trees. When you picked up the ball the diamond would seem far away; the shouts for you to throw would be muffled by the distance; the batter would be rounding second base — and then I'd reach up, catch a branch, and swing myself up. I'd stretch forward, put my hands carefully between the broken bottles on the top of the wall, then edge over with my feet. I'd jump down, ignoring the pain as I crashed into the heap of garbage, bones, bits of horn, broken chairs, tin cans, rags, newspapers, dead vermin. Then I'd run on, tearing myself on thistles, stumbling into a drain of filthy water, but running on and on, as the dry crack of rifles sounded far behind me.

Stories
Sergio Ramirez
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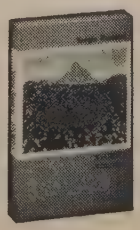


BASEBALL IN NICARAGUA

BY JAY FELDMAN

Baseball began with the upper class; now, *everyone* plays.

THE RUNNER ON FIRST BASE broke with the pitch. The batter struck out swinging, and the catcher's throw to second was high and off to the shortstop's side of the bag. The runner slid in head first as the second baseman made a late, sweeping tag, but to the surprise of everyone in the ballpark, the umpire's hand shot up and he rang up the runner for the third out of the inning. The runner slowly got to his feet and dusted himself off; as he trotted off the field, he shook his head in silent disagreement.

It was the third time in this Nicaraguan First Division (their equivalent of Major League) baseball game in the stadium at Esteli that an umpire had made a questionable call, and each time, the players' reactions had been the same — no kicking dirt, no tantrums, no in-the-umpire's-face. I turned to my companion, Emigdio Sequeira, and asked him, through our interpreter, "Do the players always behave with such equanimity towards the umpires?" Emigdio is a leprechaun, and his face lit up with delight at this question. "Before the revolution," he said, "there used to be *terrible* fights between the players and the umpires. Now, we try to have a different attitude. Of course, there are still disagreements — after all, arguing with umpires is part of baseball — but since the triumph, we've been able to recognize that we're all brothers in the struggle, and now it's considered impolite to be abusive towards umpires."

To say that Nicaraguans are crazy for baseball is a monumental understatement, sort of like saying that Romeo really liked Juliet. Baseball is a *passion* in Nicaragua, a profound expression of the national character. There's a saying in Nicaragua that every boy is born with a glove and ball in his hand — *"Nacio con un guante y una bola en la mano."* In Nicaragua, Sunday and baseball are synonymous. Driving along in the countryside on a Sunday, you'll see baseball everywhere — kids playing pick-up

Jay Feldman went to Nicaragua to play baseball, and left with a book. This is an adaptation from that work, Hot Corner: A Nicaraguan Baseball Adventure, *still in search of a publisher. His baseball writing has appeared in* Sports Illustrated *and other publications.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

Photographs by John Krich

games in cow pastures, middle-aged men playing catch by the side of the road, uniformed teams playing on sandlot fields. Any day of the week, on the streets of every town, you'll find kids playing some form of the game — often with a homemade ball fashioned out of a pair of socks and a tree limb for a bat.

As such, baseball is one of the main bridges between our cultures. The game in Nicaragua is the same game we play in the States, with some noticeable differences. The pitchers, for example, all seem to release from the side; I saw very few pitching over the top. Many of them have two or three deliveries, from three-quarter to submarine [underhand]. They throw a lot of breaking stuff and not that much heat.

Every conference on the mound is a regular summit meeting. I mean, *everybody* gets in on the act. The pitcher, the catcher, the manager, all the infielders and, if it's a game situation in the late innings, even the outfielders come in. Socialist baseball.

There are some idiosyncratic differences: in the situation where the catcher has been at bat or on base at the end of his team's at-bat and therefore has to redon his catching gear, the reserve player who warms up the pitcher almost always make the throw down to second after the last warm-up pitch. You *never* see that in the States.

In the games I saw out in the countryside, many of the players didn't run out easy ground balls. In the States, of course, that is a cardinal sin. From the first moment you step in on a ballfield, running out every grounder is one of the bottom lines of the game — like not throwing your bat. The quickest way to earn a benching, whether it be in Little League or the pros, is to not run out a ground ball. It didn't seem to have the same stigma down there.

Small differences.

One of the more noticeable differences is crowd behavior. Probably because many of the fields are so rough, errors are a more accepted part of the game. There are several miscues in every contest, and while *los fanaticos* often hoot at a booted ground ball, it's good-natured razzing; nobody seems to get down on a player for an error. The level of Nicaraguan First Division ball is roughly equivalent to Single A ball in this country; it should also be noted that First Division players are not professionals in the sense that we use the term, i.e., they have other jobs besides playing baseball. The flavor in the stands at First Division games is not unlike the feeling in many minor league games in the U.S. — supportive, baseball-savvy fans who appreciate the players' efforts and generally regard them with affection and respect — in contrast with our big-league fans who often won't hesitate to boo someone for making a bad play.

Impressed in much the same way I had been at the politeness of the players toward the umpires, I asked Emigdio about the decorum of the crowds. "Yes," he replied, "it's the same way with the fans. See this fence?" he asked, pointing to the heavy chain-link fence which completely separates the spectators from the field in every First Division stadium. "In the old days, that was as much to protect the players from objects being thrown from the stands as it was to keep the fans from being hurt by batted balls. Now, however, we've been able to change those attitudes to a large degree, and we no longer have very many serious problems with unsportsmanlike fans."

I found Emigdio's explanation of player and fan behavior to be generally credible. Sportsmanship *is* a paramount concern. One morning, we went to the National Stadium hoping to see the Dantos team — which represents the Sandinista Army — practice, but when we got to the ballpark, the team wasn't there. We caught up with the players at a nearby school, where they were taking a written exam to qualify for the National All-Star team — an exam which contained questions about all aspects of the game, including sportsmanship and decorum. (I did see a pretty good rhubarb at the National Stadium one Sunday, but even that was conducted in a quite civilized manner.)

In general, the fans are less vocal than what we're used to. It's not that they aren't into the game — they absolutely are. It's just that individual fans don't seem to yell insults *or* encouragement to individual players. They cheer as one.

At the end of every First Division game, several hundred kids pour onto the field. No attempt is made to stop them. A steady stream of youngsters, like ants on a mission, run around and around the basepaths in both directions, sliding endlessly into every base. The players and the crowd mingle easily, with no distinctions made. I felt somehow that this is what baseball must have been like in the U.S. during the early decades of this century, when the lines between players and fans had not yet been so rigidly drawn.

Baseball came to Nicaragua in the late nineteenth century, and its history is but one thread woven into the complex tapestry of U.S. involvement there over the last 150 years. The origins of baseball in Nicaragua are hazy. The game was introduced by upper-class young men who had learned to play while attending college in the United States. Nicaragua's first team, founded in 1891, was called the "Managua Base-Ball Club." The turn of the century saw a flowering of the sport, and a proliferation of new teams sprang up, including three clubs called "New York," "Manchester," and "Chicago." In 1905, U.S. Consul Carter Donaldson sponsored a new team named "Boer," after the South African settlers who fought against the British in the bloody Boer War; the Boer club survives to this day as one of the ten teams that comprise Nicaragua's First Division.

This development of baseball, of course, was an upper-class activity, but there was a significant, parallel spread of the sport among workers on the farms and ranches, who learned the game from their masters and began playing with rudimentary equipment.

At about the same time, sailors of the U.S. Navy,

who had landed on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast in 1894, began to play ball there. (The U.S. first intervened with military forces in Nicaragua in 1847, and was involved in military occupation of the country on and off until the latter twentieth century.) The sailors had their gloves, bats and balls, and they constructed little ballfields in the towns of the area and began to play baseball.

Though the natives exhibited a keen interest in these contests, the sailors, for whatever reasons, refused to teach them how to play. Nevertheless, the locals observed how the pastime was conducted, and since

Real sandlot softball in Poncloya, Nicaragua.

they were excluded from the sailors' games, cleared fields for themselves, and with indigenous materials, fashioned their own primitive bats, balls and gloves, and began playing. Little by little, they improved their equipment — when an American player hit a foul, for example, one of the Nicaraguan spectators would get the ball and run away with it.

Whatever the other consequences of the two extended occupations of Nicaragua by United States Marines in the first half of this century (1912-1925 and 1926-1933), there can be no doubt that they fostered the process of rooting our national pastime ever more deeply in Nicaraguan soil.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Nicaraguans enjoyed direct radio transmission of big league ball games from the U.S., and there was tremendous interest in American major-league ball. "People here were behaving like they were in the United States in relation to U.S. baseball," one Nicaraguan told me. "We first got to know the people of the United States through baseball and your great baseball players — Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Bill Skowron, Whitey Ford." Ironically — or maybe not — all the players he named were Yankees.

In the '50s and '60s, the Somoza government subsidized a professional league which imported talent from the United States. On a visit to the recently rebuilt Managua Stadium (now renamed Rigoberto Lopez Perez National Stadium, after the poet who assassinated the first Somoza), Emigdio would point out the spot in deepest right-center field where Marv Throneberry reputedly hit a ball out of the park — a distance of well over 500 feet. Like other Latin American "winter leagues," the Nicaraguan circuit provided an off-season opportunity for U.S major leaguers and Triple A-level minor leaguers to sharpen their skills, earn some money, and make time with the *senoritas.*

In the then eight-team First Division, seven clubs were sponsored by Nicaraguan businessmen, and the eighth, *Cinco Estrellas* (Five Stars), represented Somoza's despised National Guard. In those days, one of the only public demonstrations of defiance against the dictatorship was to boo *Cinco Estrellas* and root for the other Managua team, Boer.

In the late sixties, when the price of cotton on the international market plummeted, Somoza withdrew government funding from baseball, and Nicaraguan professional ball withered. Amateur baseball took its place, and the Nicaraguan national team, *La Seleccion Nacional,* became one of the best in Latin America.

In December, 1972, in the midst of a nationwide economic crisis, with *somocismo* already beginning to deteriorate, the amateur World Championship tournament was held in the Nicaraguan capital city of Managua, with 23 countries participating. "Somoza waged a big propaganda campaign to promote the championships," recalls Carlos Cuadra, the present commissioner of Nicaraguan baseball. "He tried to use baseball to distract the people from their poverty, from the misery of their conditions. Nicaragua won the championship, and for the next five days, Somoza was king; we refer to that time as 'the five days of *somocismo.*'" On the sixth day, Managua was devastated by an earthquake in which ten thousand people were killed, and tens of thousands more were injured and/or left homeless. (It was to Managua that Pittsburgh Pirates star and Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente was headed with earthquake relief supplies on New Year's Eve, when his plane crashed and he was killed; accordingly, the Puerto Rican-born Clemente is a national hero in Nicaragua.)

Although the Somoza dynasty would never recover from effects of the quake, Nicaraguan amateur baseball was now in its Golden Age. According to Cuadra, "While baseball under Somoza was a game of the elite and not an expression of the masses, the Nicaraguan people nevertheless identified strongly with the national team of the early '70s."

Throughout the '70s, Nicaragua was a dominant

force in international amateur competition, and several Nicaraguan ballplayers from this era — including David Green, Al Williams, Porfirio Altamirano and, most popular of all, pitcher Dennis Martinez — eventually made it to the major leagues.

With the triumph of the revolution in July, 1979, the structure of Nicaraguan society changed radically, and the changes in baseball reflected the new order. "Baseball was always a business under Somoza, an elitist affair," explains Yamil Zuniga, director of the Nicaraguan Institute of Sports, which, interestingly, is part of the Ministry of Culture. "There was never any concern with the human condition of the players — many of them, even the best ones, couldn't read and write. They were just paid a salary, and that was it. Now, we have programs to educate them because we have an obligation to help them with their futures. Now, baseball is part of the development of the country."

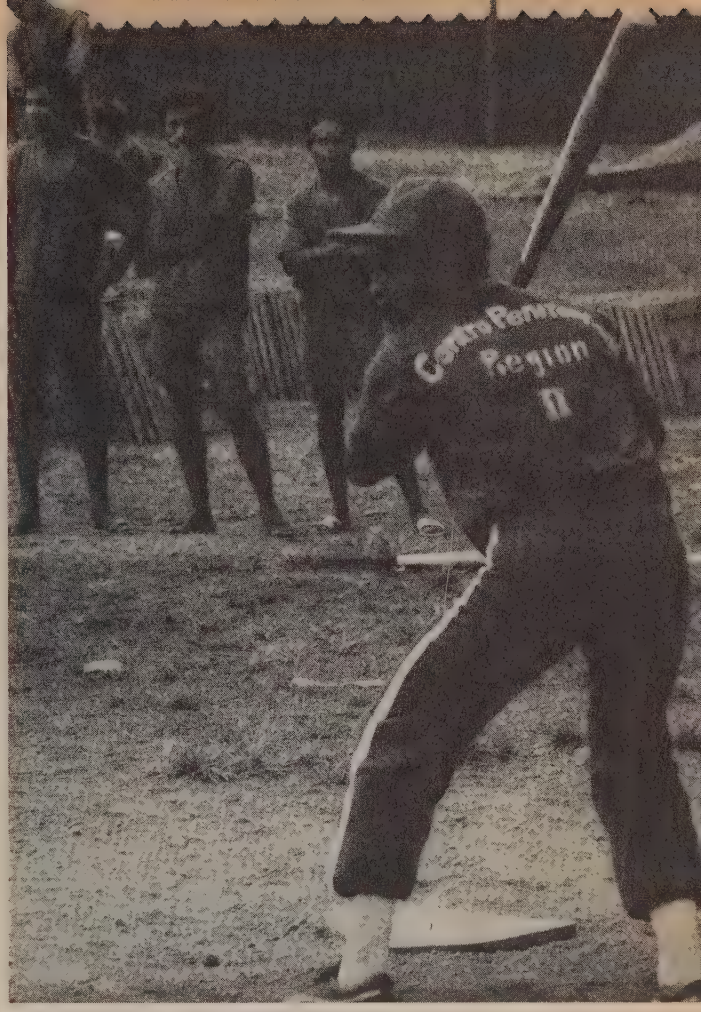
Under the new government, baseball has become a vehicle for building national pride and awareness. Ballplayers are regarded as a national resource, and like any other national resource, they belong to the people. To fully understand the implications of this, we need to understand the concept of economic *dependency,* particularly as it relates to Nicaragua.

Dependency refers to a condition in which the economy of an underdeveloped nation is externally oriented toward foreign markets, and the government is controlled by a ruling elite which, in association with international cartels, reaps the lion's share of the profits of this exploitative situation. Prerevolutionary Nicaragua, from the 16th-century Spanish conquest to the Somoza dynasty, was an extreme example of this condition.

The Sandinista government has made every attempt to break with this history. The departure from dependency as it relates to baseball can be seen in an anecdote told to me by Gary Ruchwarger, a writer who has lived in Nicaragua for several years. Gary is related by marriage to Oakland A's president Roy Eisenhardt, and a couple of years ago he wrote to Eisenhardt, mentioning the untapped source of baseball talent in Nicaragua. According to Gary, the A's looked into the possibility of sending scouts down, but the Sandinista government declined the invitation, pointing out that it had no interest in exporting Nicaragua's best players to the U.S. because that would decimate the native baseball program, which was then — indeed, to this day is *still* — recovering from the dependency mentality.

The problem was that the development program of the '70s nurtured only about thirty of the country's best ballplayers at any one time, and when these players got older, there was no deep talent pool to draw from in replacing them. After the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, Nicaragua's stature as an international baseball power declined drastically, and, as noted, is still in a period of recovery.

Cuadra explained the implications of this in detail: "Our policy is to create baseball for the Nicaraguan people. It would be a real loss for us if we used our money, our strength, our materials to develop baseball players and then one day they are taken away to play in the Major Leagues to benefit someone else. It would also be very difficult for our people to see that one day a player is here playing for the Nicaraguan people and the next day he is being paid dollars. However, we have no law prohibiting scouts from the United States from coming here, and we have no law preventing Nicaraguans from playing in the Major Leagues. But, of course, we are not going to promote that situation."



The convict team of Tipitapa Prison.

The rebuilding efforts have been somewhat successful. When the Nicaraguan national team defeated the U.S. national team, 9-5, at the 1983 Pan Am games and finished second (Cuba was first), thereby earning an invitation to the '84 Olympic Games, Nicaraguan national pride swelled. The team was trounced, 19-2, in its first game of the Olympics by eventual champion Japan, and now it's said, "That

Since the embargo, the baseball factory has had difficulty getting materials. Production is insufficient, though quality is good.

night even the *contras* cried." (In October 1985, Nicaragua exacted a small measure of revenge when, at the world amateur games in Havana, it defeated Japan on a *jonrón* by star second baseman Julio Medina, generally acknowledged to be Nicaragua's best ballplayer.)

But baseball is also much more than just a matter of national pride — it is the main recreation of a nation under attack. "Our people have many difficulties," says Cuadra, "and baseball is their only pastime, and they really take advantage of it."

Since May 1985, when the Reagan Administration underscored its funding of the *contra* forces by imposing a trade embargo against Nicaragua, conditions have been doubly difficult, yet even the embargo has a baseball story attached to it: the day that Vice-President Sergio Ramirez's speech announcing the embargo was scheduled to air on national TV and radio was also the day of the sixth game of the national championship series between the Granada and Dantos clubs. The vice-president's talk was supposed to air at 2 p.m., but the game went into extra innings, and although Ramirez, a noted baseball fan, delivered his speech on schedule, it wasn't broadcast until 4 p.m. — half an hour after Granada had won the game in the nineteenth inning.

Cuadra spoke to me about how war and the embargo have taken their toll on baseball. "After the triumph, the new government created a sports industry, a factory, in the attempt to help us become self-sufficient in terms of baseball equipment, and although we're doing well with our quality — the balls we're producing compare well with those made around the world — our production is insufficient. For example, ideally, we need 3,500 high-quality baseballs a month for our First Division, and we can't produce all those. We don't have the foreign currency to buy the rest of them at five or six dollars each — which includes the cost of transporting them here — because it would be a terrible mistake on the part of our government to buy things like baseballs when we still have children that need to be educated, fed and given medical care.

"And you also have to understand the difficulties that we have in simply getting all the materials to make our own balls. The cover, for instance, is leather, and there are many different industries demanding this product. As the war of aggression grows, our military defense budget has to get larger, and leather is needed for boots for the soldiers. That's just one way the war affects our lives here — without mentioning the many *companeros* who could be playing baseball, enjoying themselves on the ballfield and being formed into First Division players, but instead are having to carry a gun in their hands to defend the country."

The poignancy of this last comment was brought home when Emigdio, who administers over 700 teams for UNAG (a private organization representing 125,000 farmers and cattle ranchers), told me that in the last three years, 170 players from the *campesino* leagues have fallen at the hands of the *contra* forces, and that many of the championships in the regions most affected by the war have been suspended because so many of the players have been affected by the draft.

"We would like to regain the position we had in 1972 as a strong baseball power in world competition," Cuadra summed up, "but we are having trouble rebuilding our system. Nevertheless, our baseball program is more our own now than it was then — we make our own baseballs; we make our own gloves. We don't yet have the technology to make aluminum bats, but we do make wooden ones. And even though the technology we've developed is not really first-rate, at least we can say it's ours, and all the people can benefit from it."

I learned more about the importance of baseball in present-day Nicaraguan society from Marco Gonzales, a dairy and coffee farmer from north of Jinotega. He spoke to me with humor, in English, about baseball in Nicaragua.

"In Nicaragua, we love to gamble. We play baseball, and always we bet money. There is no baseball game without gambling. It is a popular thing — everybody gambles. Another thing which is very closely linked to baseball is drinking. When people win, they drink because they won; when people lose, they drink because they lost. It is a very popular activity. Every Sunday they go and play, and afterwards everyone gets drunk. So, baseball is a social activity."

Here, Marco's demeanor turned more serious — not solemn, not grave, but he spoke with added emphasis. "We have reckoned that if you had a war in the United States like the one we have here, taking into account the proportions, you would now have over a million dead. Over one million dead. This represents for us 35,000 in five years. Not to mention the handicapped people, wounded people, people who now have mental diseases as a consequence of the war, families who are destroyed, and a lot of things which are not material things, but which could be included as spiritual wounds of the war. So, in the context of this cruel war, sports are a way of keeping our people alive. Art and sports are two ways to keep the people from thinking only about the war. It is surprising how we Nicaraguans are mentally very healthy people, and this is perhaps because we have means of coming away from the war. And baseball is one of the main ways. This is why baseball is so important. It is very important that our people never be caught in a war mentality. We have to fight with all our strength never to acquire a war mentality. And one of the main ways of fighting this is by playing baseball. And of course when the war is over — and some day it *will* be over because we have a saying in Nicaragua, 'All soups become cold one day' — when it is over, you can be sure that we will have one of the greatest baseball teams in Latin America because we love baseball and have the raw materials to develop it."

The simplest, yet perhaps the most profoundly eloquent statement I heard concerning the significance of baseball in Nicaraguan society came from Humberto Ortega, Minister of Defense and brother of President Daniel Ortega, at a ballgame between the Dantos and Chinandega teams at the National Stadium. We'd been escorted past armed guards to a VIP box behind home plate, and it was pointed out to me that in the box to our left, amid half a dozen security men, sat the minister of defense and several of his brother's children. Humberto Ortega's love of baseball is well known in Nicaragua; he sponsors the Dantos team, but also takes an interest in all the other First Division teams.

Sometime during the course of the game, I asked him if it would be all right to take a photograph. A shy man, with a soft and open face, he smiled and said, *"Seguro,"* and indicated that after the game ended we'd have a chance to talk. Our conversation was brief, but to the point. "In spite of all the difficulties facing our country," said the Minister, explaining the importance of baseball in Nicaragua, "we believe that our people have the right to have fun *(divertirse)*."

The biggest difference, then, between baseball in Nicaragua and in the United States is the importance of the game, its place in the society. In fact, after being in Nicaragua for several days, and having had a chance to get to know the tremendous warmth and dignity of the Nicaraguan people, I began to think of baseball as a metaphor for the revolution, because in order to be successful in baseball, you have to have the perfect balance of individualism and cooperation. Each player has a chance to shine — there's even internal competition among teammates to see who can be the best on an individual level — but if you don't ultimately play for the good of the team, you'll hurt your club. While you might gain the admiration of the fans by your individual achievements, you'll lose the respect of your teammates over the long haul.

I began to think in these terms when I learned that the FSLN had been formed in 1961. I was amazed to hear that; I had no idea that the organized resistance to Somoza went on for almost *twenty years* before the people were able to overthrow the dictatorship. Think about that. Twenty years of sacrifice and grassroots organizing, over 40,000 Nicaraguans killed, countless more injured and maimed, yet they never gave up.

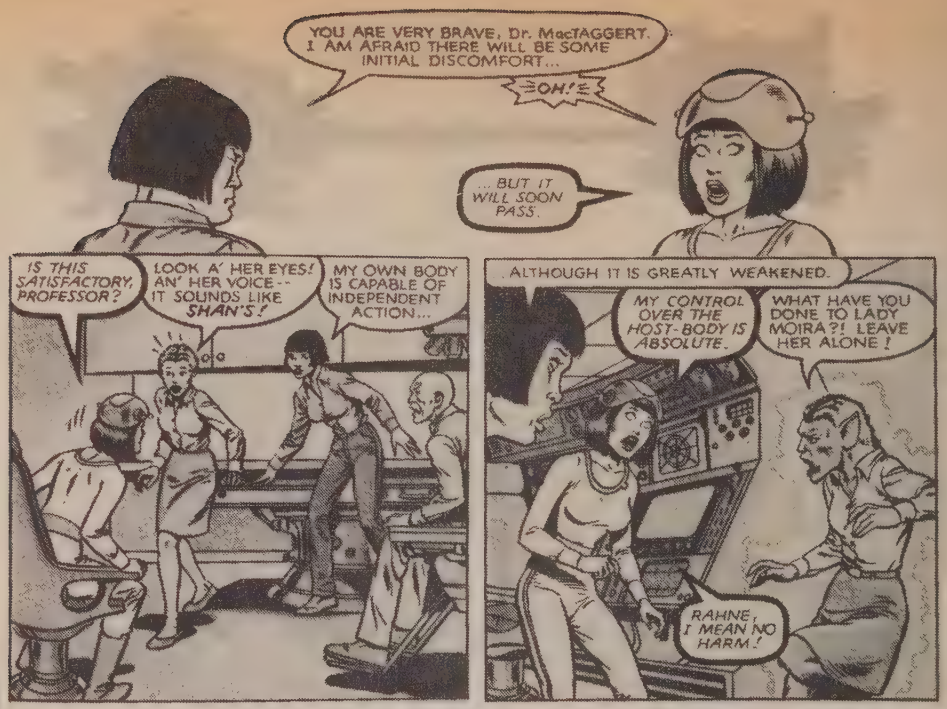
It reminds me of something William Saroyan wrote in a short essay called "My Baseball," published thirty years ago in *Sports Illustrated* (10/8/56): "Baseball is caring. Player and fan alike must care, or there is no game. . . .

"The caring is whole and constant, whether warranted or hopeless, tender or angry, ribald or reverent. From the first pitch to the last out the caring continues. With a score of 6-0, two outs, two strikes, nobody on, only an average batter at bat, it is still possible, and sometimes necessary, to believe something can still happen — for the simple reason that it *has* happened before, and very probably will again. And when it does, won't that be the day? Isn't that alone almost enough to live for, assuming there might just be little else? To witness so pure a demonstration of the unaccountable way by which the human spirit achieves stunning, unbelievable grandeur? . . .

"It is good to care — in any dimension."

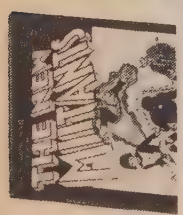
To me, that also tells the story of the liberation of Nicaragua, and explains, perhaps, in some small way, why they are so crazy for baseball there: in Nicaragua, they *care*. In 1961 in Nicaragua, the score was indeed 6-0, with two outs, two strikes, nobody on, only an average batter at bat, and yet, a handful of people believed that something could still happen — for the simple reason that it *had* happened before, and very probably would again. And when it did, wasn't that the day? Wasn't that alone almost enough to have lived for, assuming there might just be little else? To have witnessed so pure a demonstration of the unaccountable way by which the human spirit achieves stunning, unbelievable grandeur?

It *is* good to care — in any dimension. ■


YOU ARE VERY BRAVE, Dr. MacTAGGERT. I AM AFRAID THERE WILL BE SOME INITIAL DISCOMFORT..
OH!
...BUT IT WILL SOON PASS.
IS THIS SATISFACTORY, PROFESSOR?
LOOK A' HER EYES! AN' HER VOICE-- IT SOUNDS LIKE SHAN'S!
MY OWN BODY IS CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT ACTION...
ALTHOUGH IT IS GREATLY WEAKENED.
MY CONTROL OVER THE HOST-BODY IS ABSOLUTE.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO LADY MOIRA?! LEAVE HER ALONE!
RAHNE, I MEAN NO HARM!

The New Mutants

X-Men
Christopher Claremont and Brent Eric Anderson
1982
$5.95
postpaid from:
The Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016



The New Mutants
Chris Claremont and Bob McLeod
1982
$4.95
postpaid from:
The Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Classic X-Men
Jim Shooter, Editor
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Classic X-Men
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New York, NY 10016

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The Uncanny X-Men
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New York, NY 10016

The Uncanny X-Men

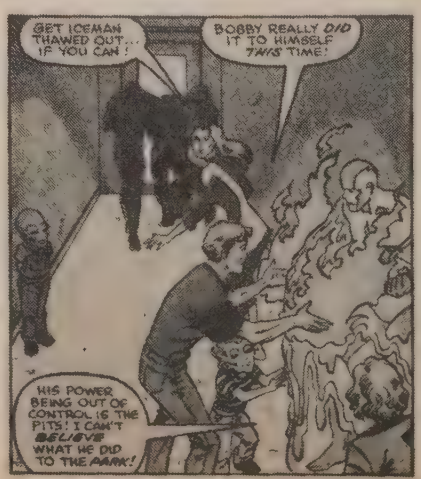
One of the hoariest American pulp genres — superhero comic books — has undergone a renaissance during the last few years. A few dozen passionate writers, artists, and editors are behind the growing variety available.

*The best comics writers — Alan Moore, Frank Miller, Marv Wolfman, John Byrne — often bounce between a variety of titles, characters, and publishers. But one of the most influential series, **The Uncanny X-Men**, has been scripted by the same person since 1975 — a writer named Chris Claremont. **X-Men** is currently Marvel's best-selling series.*

*In the **X-Men** storyline, hundreds of men and women are afflicted with superpowers caused by freak genetic mutation. Some teleport; others turn their body into solid, living steel; others create dream-images or generate light beams or are supernaturally lucky. Ordinary people scorn and fear the "muties," who live among them, either plotting their own gain or else (like the X-Men), accepting the responsibility of living ethically with their special abilities.*

*The mutant characters dominate four related titles: **The Uncanny X-Men** (the main team); **The New Mutants** (their sibling team of teenagers, scripted by longtime **X-Men** editor Louise Simonson; **X-Factor** (a team of former X-Men, also scripted by Simonson); and **Classic X-Men** (updated reprints from the late seventies).' —Art Kleiner*

The Uncanny X-Men


GET ICEMAN THAWED OUT... IF YOU CAN!
BOBBY REALLY DID IT TO HIMSELF THIS TIME!
HIS POWER BEING OUT OF CONTROL IS THE PITS! I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT HE DID TO THE AARK!

X-Factor

Memory of Fire: Genesis • Faces and Masks

The first of a three-volume history of the Americas called ***Memory of Fire****,* ***Genesis*** *attempts the "rescue of the kidnapped memory of all America" through more than 300 anecdotes, chronologically arranged and with sources documented. That is where any resemblance to traditional history ends. Author Eduardo Galeano is a journalist by trade, but he is a poet in these pages. With each carefully crafted entry worthy of being read aloud, the entire work reminds me of nothing so much as an epic poem.*

Genesis *begins with creation myths from Pre-Columbian America and concludes in 1700. Volume II,* ***Faces and Masks****, covers the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Volume III, yet to be published in English, will bring the story up to the present.* —*Keith Jordan*

Memory of Fire
Vol. I: Genesis
Eduardo Galeano
1985; 293 pp.
$8.95
($9.95 postpaid)

Vol. II: Faces and Masks
Eduardo Galeano
1987; 276 pp.
$18.95
($19.95 postpaid)

Both from:
Pantheon Books
Random House
400 Hahn Road
Westminster, MD 21157
or Whole Earth Access

■

1699: Macouba
A Practical Demonstration

To put some gusto into his slaves' work in this land of sluggishness and drowsiness, Father Jean-Baptiste Labat tells them he was black before coming to Martinique and that God whitened him as a reward for the fervor and submission with which he served his masters in France.

The black carpenter of the church is trying to make a difficult dovetailing of a beam and cannot get the angle right. Father Labat draws some lines with a ruler and compass, and he orders: "Cut it here."

The angle is right.

"Now I believe you," says the slave, looking him in the eyes. "No white man could do that." —*Genesis*

•

1881: Lincoln City
Billy the Kid
"I'm gonna give you a tip, doc."

Until a minute ago, Billy the Kid was awaiting the gallows in a cell. Now he aims at the sheriff from the top of the stairs.

"I'm gettin' tired, doc."

The sheriff throws him the key to the handcuffs and when Billy bends down there is a burst of revolver fire. The sheriff topples with a bullet in his eye and his silver star in smithereens.

Billy is twenty-one and has twenty-one notches in the butt of his Colt, not counting a score of Apaches and Mexicans, who died unrecorded.

"I wouldn't do that if I was you, stranger."

He began his career at twelve, when a bum insulted his mother, and he took off at full gallop, brandishing a razor that dripped blood. —*Faces and Masks*

A Quick & Dirty Guide to War

Who's doing what to whom, why, where, for how long, with what weaponry, with what tactical end in mind, and so on. The sources of conflict are examined, political polarizations discussed, geographical considerations taken into account . . . and each conflict is examined from the point of view of superpower interest on political, economic, military and historical viewpoints. At the back of the book is a series of tables laying out all world conflicts, wars, revolutions and insurgencies, rated as to relative danger to world peace, probability that the conflict will still be going on within a set period of time, possibility of escalation, form of government of the opponents and the stability of these governments, number of combatants fielded by the opposing forces, quality of the forces, losses incurred . . . on and on, all presented in an amazingly readable fashion by men who are clearly interested in eschewing bullshit so that the reader can learn what the hell is going on and why. Moreover, each main conflict is then parsed down to potential outcomes, with the scenarios rated for probability. This fascinating book begs to be read in a day, with rereadings to follow. It's slightly out of date by this time, but you couldn't ask for a better place to start an understanding of world politics. —*Al Sirois*
[Suggested by Cpt. James Suriano]

A Quick & Dirty Guide to War
James F. Dunnigan
and Austin Bay
1985; 415 pp.
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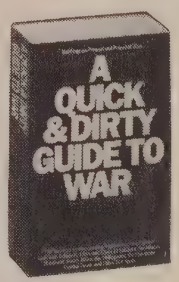

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Zaire fights several wars. First, there's an internal war, fought among the country's elites over who will control the government. Second, there are the tribal conflicts, often between Zairian provinces that but for colonialism would be different tribal nations. Then come the wars of outside interests, like the Angolans who sponsor to some degree the regular Katangan invasions, which become minor border wars. Sometimes this favor is reciprocated by Zaire, which from 1975 to 1982 sponsored a revolt in Angola's Cabinda Province. Finally, there's the war between Zaire and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which tries to cycle cash from the relatively wealthy of the world to the definitely poor. Zaire is losing this economic war, in large part because of the endemic Zairian governmental corruption. Economic aid has a way of ending up in the Swiss bank accounts of the Zairian elites. Almost every nation in middle Africa suffers from similar problems, the only differences being in degree.

Sources of conflict
Zaire's problems are classic examples of the twentieth-century results of nineteenth-century colonialism. In European parlors borders were drawn on the basis of who had explorers and troops wherever and/or whoever was currently in political hock to whom. Tribal areas, cultural development, and language were given little consideration. The racist colonialists thought the natives were all "wogs," and that the empire's troops could bring order out of any chaos. But empires break up. The Belgians tried to keep the Congo and succeeded for fifteen or so post-World War II years. But it is a big task to control the tens of millions of people in central Africa. Central Africans have trouble doing it and they live there. Zaire has more than 200 different ethnic groups. The four major tribes constitute only 45 percent of the population. Zaire should have been several countries, but then history's filled with should-haves. . . .

WHEN MY HUSBAND AND I first began the process that led, after 22 long months, to the adoption of our second and third children from Guatemala, we naively considered it a simple way to expand a family. Biology no longer worked for us. The extraordinary change in consciousness that has followed — and continues — was a most unexpected surprise. Not only have we changed our understanding of what it means to be a mother and a father, of the difference between those roles, but we look at the world's children in a different light. I have seen the orphanage where my adopted children lived, and nothing has had a more profound effect on my thinking about American fertility technology.

Adoption has many faces, not all smiling. There are fundamental differences between foreign and domestic adoption, between the adoption of an invisible, same-race child and an obviously adopted child. I know many adoptive families, and each is fiercely attached not only to the children involved, but to their inherent right to *be* a family, to *become* a family in this way. But in every adoptive family there is a child that has been orphaned, abandoned, or given up by a parent in order for that family to exist.

I know a woman who searched for her birth mother from the age of 21 until last year, when she was 33. She had been raised in an alcoholic family, and believed that her rearing was a clue to herself, and that if she could find her birth family she would know who she might have been, who she would become. "I would delve into those deep dark caves of imagination and play out the scenes, try to picture her (my birth mother's) face, what our first words would be to each other, how it would feel to be held by her again," she writes. Last year, this woman found her birth mother, and, with considerable trepidation, got on an airplane and went to see her. "To say my reunion went well with happy smiles and all-is-forgiven speeches would be stretching the truth. We like each other fine. . . . But the reality is this: I was raised in an alcoholic, dysfunctional home. My birth mother is an alcoholic. Both my birth and adoptive families were poor and Catholic. Both have had enough tragedy to wear themselves down. . . . One thing about me, in the now: I am old enough to be my own mother. And if I had it to do over, I would still choose to know the truth, because the lies hurt far more."

I have three children now, and I'll have more. I am often startled when people point out that we're a multiracial family — I forget. But I never forget that we're an adoptive family, because it's part of the truth of our relationship to each other. We do the best for our children that we can, trying not to forget that adopted children carry a peculiar burden. The two very different stories that follow are each windows into the world of orphans and adoption.

—Sallie Tisdale

THE SYNTHETIC FAMILY

BY JOHN TAYLOR GATTO *in collaboration with his daughter*

ON SEPTEMBER 25th, 1985, in Southampton, Massachussetts, an eight-year-old boy, adopted at the age of three, stole his teacher's purse from her desk at the Whitebrook School. Removing her car keys, the little boy took off in her car in an attempt to find his real mother, from whom he'd been removed in his own best interests.

He drove the Ford Pinto a mile and a half over three streets and into Southampton. There he lost control of the vehicle. It shot off the road, passed through a barbed-wire fence and halted in a field. When the police arrived, the boy was huddled on the seat crying for his real mother.

He was arrested.

"It's a sad thing," officer Dennis Arruda said, "but we have to do what we have to do."

Town officials said they would ask the court to provide "private adjustment counseling" for the boy and returned him to his adoptive parents.

I took that story off the AP wire two years ago. Presumably by now the boy's hunger for his blood-mother has been "adjusted."

Some years ago I heard of an adoptee stricken with thyrotoxicosis — he could not blink. "If I blink my eyes," he said, "I might miss my mother."

In the 20 years after I put my own children up for adoption, I tried not to blink. I studied every face on the street for my little girl and, eventually, for my boy as well. Three times in those years she came to New York City to the

Museum of Natural History, just a block from where I taught, two blocks from the home she'd lost and the mother she'd lost.

I missed her because I blinked at the wrong time. The adoption laws made sure there were no second chances. "The institution of adoption cannot survive without secrecy," said the State Apellate Court of New York in March, 1987, ruling against a 55-year-old adopted man's appeal for access to his natural family.

Don't get me wrong. Nobody else is responsible for putting my family to death by adoption but myself. The adoption industry isn't a principal in my family's agony, only the instrument of a philosophy nearly 2,400 years old. It holds that families, with their promiscuous affection, unconditional sanctuary, and ever-present danger of becoming self-contained, autonomous, and independent, jeopardize the existence of the great synthetic family institutions.

I know they're right. Look at my own example. Last year I legally readopted my own daughter and am at present hunting my son. The State Appellate Court is right — if you want to keep adoption as an instrument of state policy, you'd better mark those files "Top Secret," no matter how many lives that mutilates.

In a real sense adoption agencies and courts don't break natural homes to create synthetic ones any more than you could fairly say cigarette *companies* cause lung cancer. The victim has victimized himself, hasn't he? Would you say that gun *companies* shoot people? Or that liquor companies convert one in ten Americans into alcoholics?

Baby agents are just instruments, neutral in themselves. Call the hands that wield them Darwinian Natural Selection. Call the effects of their use the victory of the Elect over the Reprobate, God's victory — or perhaps the victory of the rational mind over the primitive, "in the best interests of the child."

The adoption agency didn't hustle me out of my kids — growing up absurd did that long before the agency's troops got my first kid. Otherwise, like Hester Prynne, I'd have said "You'll have to kill me first." Who's responsible for having me grow up absurd? Was it the state schools that compelled my attendance? Was it my own horribly wounded family, wearing the prostheses of church, nation, corporation? Or am I the guilty party?

We're ready to commence the proceedings. The material you're about to read is intensely personal and relentlessly subjective. Because that's up-front, there will be a temptation to distance yourself from involvement unless you are one of the 30 million people involved, one way or another, in American adoption.

That would be a mistake. This article is about you.

April 26, 1983

Dear Mr. Gatto,

Are you my father? If so I would like to meet you even if you would not like to meet me. I beg you to respond. I don't know what else to say. Please meet with me. What have you got to lose?

—Pamela F

Am I your father? Listen, how would you expect me to answer that? It is a wise father who knows his own child? Am I your father? Go away. Am I your father?

Consider a Christian whose path to personal salvation in *Pilgrim's Progress* is entered upon only by discarding his wife and four children, I haven't done too badly. I merely threw back three of my own and kept my wife: that's progress of a sort, yes?

A little background before the show starts.

On April 25, 1983, Pamela F., a 22-year-old college junior, acting on intuition, looked for her long-lost father's name in *Authors in Print.*

It was there. She wrote a six-line note, asked the publisher, Simon & Schuster, to forward it, and got an ambiguous reply, 35 days later, acknowledging paternity but begging off any contact for a year.

By the laws of adoption she was carrying a falsified birth certificate and was denied, for life, access to her original family name and history. We had named her Briseis at birth. But her agents at the agency had surreptitiously given her adoptive family the real name during the signing of the legal papers in 1962. Against the law, but not surprising; her adoptive family were from the managerial class and used to having the rules bent. So they got the name; and when she went off to college she found it in a drawer.

For a year before we met for the first time in 23 years, our lost child traveled through Japan and Indonesia and India and Africa, a Junior Year Abroad, and wrote cautious little travelogue notes to her birth parents, seven in all. Not a trace of curiosity in any one of them. She seemed to live a hearty, selfish, very material life — with many complaints but no particular suffering (or enthusiasms, either).

Suddenly, on the eve of departing Nigeria for Egypt, everything changed. A huge, tortured letter arrived in New York, full of wild cries and bizarre pain. It was a bewildered document, a protest, inchoate, against her aching loneliness. I'd never gotten a letter like that, ever.

The concluding line: "I have no home."

That burned a hole through my heart and stripped all the armored skins, 22 years in the making, from this old serpent. All my blood went rushing out in a cataract to bathe my daughter's wounds. There's no other way to properly describe what I felt. My feet didn't touch the ground for weeks. ►

A raw cry from a wounded heart.

John Taylor Gatto has been a teacher for 25 years. He is currently writing Lost Children: A Love Letter to My Daughter. *His daughter, Briseis MacAdam Gatto, is finishing her first book,* Adoption and the Evolution of the Synthetic Family. *—Sallie Tisdale*

Over the next five months we exchanged 200,000 words of letters.

We arranged to meet in the summer of 1984, in a special place to commemorate it — the Mayan ruins of Palenque in southern Mexico, then on to Tikal in Guatemala. "All is maya," she instructed me. All is illusion. I borrowed every cent I could to use as a magic wand. Then on the way south to our rendesvous I crashed head-on into a gravel truck 20 miles north of Monterrey, Mexico. Fractured skull, shattered hip, eight teeth. Unconscious three days.

We wrote furiously after that, 400,000 more words, but never once a phone call. Then, in April, 1985, late one night in an old windswept barn near Ithaca, New York, this Odysseus met his Telemachus. We talked for 38 hours and slept for three.

My own nuclear family in Pittsburgh abandoned me about this time — an ironic echo of a color already on the palette. Whatever their reasons — they refused even one sentence of explanation — my mother, sister, and sister's kid refused to acknowledge the new child. Uncles, aunts, and cousins were generous with love but the closest kin I had to offer my daughter slammed the door in her face. They haven't spoken or written to either of us since. I miss them.

Our agenda was to discover what a family should mean, hers to explore what it signifies to be a daughter, mine to explore the ancient history of fatherhood. But almost inevitably the institution of adoption became a central part of our common agenda as Briseis/still Pamela exposed more and more of the uncertain interior life of the adopted, a ready surrender to fantasy and dreams. Karen Ann Quinlan, a famous adoptee, wrote in her diary just before she went to sleep: "I want to curl myself into a fetal rose and dream forever."

And so we went outside. And so we learned about the full measure of what had been done, what I had wrought, what she had to look forward to. Now how were we to stop the damage and keep the darkness from putting out Briseis' light?

MY DAUGHTER, Briseis, came to her captivity in a charity ward of a hospital in Manhattan on July 29, 1962.

I was an aspirant to the priesthood of the rational mind before and slightly after giving my children away. I loved the midwives of synthetic family then and believed with my whole heart that states and corporations and armies and institutions and well-trained experts were better mothers and fathers than the real thing. It had to be true. It just made perfect sense.

I don't mean to blame the rational mind for the adoptions, of course. There seem to have been powerful philosophical motives back in 1962, working on me. So I sat down, shaking, and sick with shame and hope, to try to explain to my grown daughter why she had to be abandoned.

Am I your father? Listen, how would you expect me to answer that? It is a wise father who knows his own child? Am I your father? Go away. Am I your father?

IN A QUIET HOSPITAL, Manhattan. July 29, 1962. Her bed paid by the adoption agency, though not without some argument. Fresh from the Ivy League, though penniless and unemployed, I affected bankers' grey three-piece suits with orderly challis neckties.

The agents suspected hoarded resources behind the baby I intended to squander. Adoption agents are used to the tricks of the poor — "the dangerous classes" as Mr. Charles Brace, the founder of American adoption, called us. But I didn't have a sou. My wife Janet and I lived in a $29-a-month apartment in Spanish Harlem.

Intuitively I understood we had a strong bargaining position. Though Italian and Catholic (bad passwords) I could document a 164 IQ. Janet was 100 percent Scot Highlander with impeccable Presbyterian credentials (good passwords). We were young, slim, attractive. My wife's aunt had been Teddy Roosevelt's housekeeper. The prospect of a truly blue-ribbon baby broke through the flimsy niggling of the baby agents. Our baby showed enough promise to merit free room, board, and delivery service. Yet when I met my haunted child at last her face twitched and jerked as though a demon lived there.

How did the adoption happen? All I knew was what Walt Disney told me. Loving people, open arms, aid for the distressed, the last refuge of the orphan. Those principles in mind, I worried that the agency might try to help us *keep* our baby. To keep our family from disintegrating. *Why* I was so desperate

to cut her loose, it's taken me 24 years of schoolteaching to understand, but at the time my resolution was very shaky. A compassionate challenge might have collapsed me.

In my diabolically innocent mental world, if the agents uncovered even a trace of human feeling toward our child, they'd move heaven and earth to help us grow up together.

My 20-year-old wife, an orphan herself at 11, had to be coached in a careful script. I did that for all of us. I trained her to recite a litany — of self-indulgence, child-hating and shallow materialism — so her interviewers would feel justified in taking our child.

How green we were. They already felt justified. Plato justified them when he wrote that no child should know who his parents are. St. Augustine justified them when he wrote that family affection interfered dangerously with a child's duty to God and Church. Calvin justified them when he filled the various editions of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* with naked hatred for family bonds. The *New England Primer,* America's schoolbook for 100 years, unchallenged, justified them when it taught the nation's children to look toward adoption — out of their own families and into God's — as one of the three great benefits of being elected to be saved.

After three brief mechanical interviews they took our baby and ran. Baby Gatto still had 100 days in the safe haven of her mother's womb, but her sands were swiftly running down. Still time to hear our voices, though. Still time to feel in her bloodstream the rhythms of our world. Still time to feel the beat of her own heart echoed in her mother's.

"Blood of Christ heal all my pains . . . "

I loved her. Can you believe that? Over the years I keep from that confusion one memory. I'm standing on the roof of 96th Street looking into the night sky over the East River, trying to decide *how* I can keep my little girl. And in those few minutes I do keep her.

"Water from the side of Christ wash out my stains . . ."

We run on the streets in the rain, shoeless, just like her mother and I love to do. We take 150-block walks together, eat banana-sardine sandwiches, because they're cheap. We don't have a TV set and we drink wine together even though she's too little and we play and play and play.

"Passion of Christ my comfort be . . . "

I don't send her to school and let the killers have her. Not me. Not my brilliant little beauty. I've learned from all the mistakes of my life what's important and what isn't. Money isn't important. Comfort isn't important. Stuff isn't important. And school is deadly dangerous.

"Oh good Jesus listen to me . . . "

We'd be geniuses together, all three of us. Picking up good garbage on East Side trash days, selling it to 3rd Avenue thrift shops. That's all we need. Central Park, the fireboat, the library free as the river

— milk at a quarter like bread. Walk to 42nd Street in the early morning, movies are 15 cents. Our rent's a dollar a day. And there is so much love, so much — enough for the whole world, enough to sweep her away on a dam burst of love.

"In Thy wounds let me hide . . . "

A scrap I remember again and again over the years is the thought, "They'll never let me get away with it." That floats back up to choke me out of a night on the roof in 1962. I never understand what that might mean — now that I'm 50, I do.

"Never to leave Thy sacred side . . . "

You think about it, you'll understand.

"Guard me should the foe assail me . . . "

They gave us a week together in the hospital after she was born. When that week was up, agency policy required one of us to carry the baby to the drop point, a mansion off 5th Avenue.

"Call me when my life shall fail me . . . "

And so it was I touched my baby and carried her for the first time. An everyday gesture that acquired grandeur because I'd never be called on to do it again. Thank you, Lord, for letting me hold my baby. I had no idea how much that taxi ride would come to mean to me over the years, or how much it would eventually teach me — more than leagues and leagues of Ivy and all the books in all the libraries.

"Bid me come to Thee above . . . "

I can feel the warmth of her tiny body right now.

Goodbye, darling.

"For ever and ever, Amen."

MY SECOND CHILD was born five years later. We named him Raven. His agents absorbed him into the walls when my back was turned.

How could I keep *you* and not die from what I'd done to your sister? Sauce for the goose.

Both agencies assured me I'd forget you. So why can't I forget? That was *their* business, separating families, not mine, why did they lie to us?

My third child, Harry Taylor, we killed by abortion in 1973.

According to a survey taken in New Zealand, 85 percent of all women questioned preferred abortion to adoption. So in a way my decision was the result of common humanity. I'm sorry Harry, I just wasn't strong enough to keep you alive like I did your brother and sister. You were killed after dark.

Didn't the baby agents *know* that once the snowball got going there was no way to stop the avalanche from burying you?

Your death cost me $125, no questions asked.

I was lecturing on humanities at Queens College at the time. ►

Your sister was eleven. Your brother was six. They'd left home by then, you see I made them grow up fast. Did they have troubled sleeps as your spirit passed? I hope so, little man. I made a grave for you in my mind, keep it watered with my tears.

SOME PEOPLE WILL SAY these words are the effect of the ever-active tooth of remorse gnawing outward from my inmost heart. I tell you now that's a lie — these words are written out of love for all of us who need real families. Time is very short, the rivers are catching fire. If you don't help me I won't make it; I don't think you'll make it either. We're both far past the point where machines or mechanized families can help either of us.

Thirteen years after Harry Taylor's death I dug a real grave on a remote piece of land I own in the desolation of upstate New York. I met my first child Briseis one starry night in April there last year.

It was 23 years between hugs, don't ever stay away that long again, kid.

I laid Harry to rest finally, and at once a part of me seemed to be at rest, too. He's on a slope where birds and wind go.

A good spot to sit down if you're lost.

ON NOVEMBER 19, 1986, Janet and I adopted our 24-year-old daughter in Manhattan Surrogate Court. Death by adoption, life by adoption. Now her counterfeit birth certificate carries her real name. What's important is that it's her own.

Nothing synthetic can replace the natural family as the organizational principle of life — the last four centuries of intense experimentation with synthetic varieties has proven that. The proponents of Calvin's view that churches, states, and families should be precision, clockwork machines have had ample chance to try every form of synthesis. They don't work. All of us are dying now of loneliness and insignificance.

Time for all of us to go Home.

Listen Raven, listen son. Hear the wind rising off your own land. Fly on home now, boy, you've been away too long.

Dear John,

I'm having trouble writing this.

It's clear to me that I want my real family. That whatever it costs, my life would be nothing without it. That the cost itself would probably far outshine any use I might put my life to otherwise.

I am willing to fight battles for my family and to sacrifice for it. Because of you the reality of what a blood-tie is I now know. Our bond is unmistakeable. And I am drawn to the rightness of saying it honestly.

I have a right to claim my family.

It dawned on me that even with different adoptive parents I would want to do this.

Briseis

THE END

November 12, 1986

Dear Dorothy, once my adoptive mother,

This is a letter about forever, not yesterday.

Several years ago I located my parents and began a correspondence with my father. A year and a half ago I met him and my mother.

Since that time we have painfully and joyfully come back together as a family.

I am going to be re-adopted, legally, by my real parents, Dorothy. I'm sorry things have to be this way, but I must be who I am. I apologize for this abruptness, but time is short and I wanted everyone to have the freedom to act on the truth and do not have the strength to do it any other way.

I want to heal the people who hurt me — my real parents. No one helped them to understand the value of being parents, its part in the integrity of the spirit. In some sense their children were taken away by people who knew, I think, the damage they were causing.

I don't mean you, of course. You were as much a victim of the system that recruited you as I was. It exploited your childlessness, as it did my parents' poverty. I remember making dumplings with you and sitting in the den and imagining things together. Raking leaves in the backyard. The blanket with the hunting dogs on it.

Thank you for taking care of me.

Keep the situation private from your friends, if you wish. Grown children in suburbs gotten up to look like small towns are so generally thoughtless and indifferent to human values anyway, I doubt anyone will even notice I'm gone if you don't tell them.

We'll be friends now, I hope. That simpler honesty will do us both good. Remember, you're not alone. You have a real brother, a real sister, real nieces and nephews. Live your own life and share it with them. You have a table of rich family bonds spread before you — reach out and take them, don't let somebody else's rules get in your way.

And be proud that I left. Be proud you gave me enough room so finally I came to understand at 24 what was important. Appearances and materials aren't very much after all. My natural family is poor, but they make me feel so connected with myself I have few regrets about leaving a more comfortable situation.

Remember my endless screw-ups? They weren't your fault. They weren't mine either. I've been an adoptee. That's just our style.

Dorothy, I'm trying to choose a life of truth. I want to be fruitful. Be proud of me for that. Having two families would make that a greedy sham: thin, superficial, pro forma — we've already had too much of that prescription. Already I am part of my real family's body and blood and of their mind as well. I'm not at peace yet, but now I can see the way.

Pray for me now, I must go home. ■

THE HANDMADE FAMILY

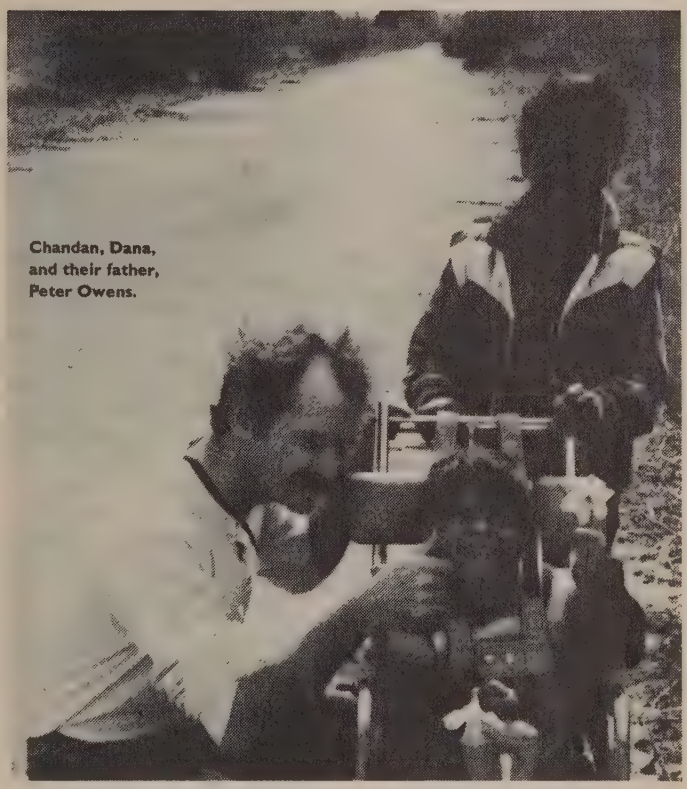
BY JUDI KLOPER

TODAY OUR ten-year-old son, Chandan, spelled his name for the first time. And our five-year-old son, Dana, spoke two complete sentences.

Every now and then, my husband and I seem to be injected with a big dose of reality. What startles us is not "what we've taken on," as many well-meaning but presumptuous people like to say to us, but how much we want to do, how little we are able to do, and what we owe our children.

Ten years ago, at the age of 22, I became pregnant. After the initial shock, we joyfully accepted our potential child. But after three months I miscarried, and in the years following, I miscarried four more times. It finally dawned on us that our obsession with pregnancy and birth was obstructing what we really wanted: to become a family. Once we realized that, the idea of children by birth didn't seem important any more. We immediately began to seek information on adoption.

We chose to adopt an infant from Calcutta, India, mainly because of the short wait. We weren't out to save the world, or to save a child. We wanted a family and we didn't want to wait any longer. We were well prepared by our agency, and by International Mission of Hope (IMH) in Calcutta. We knew these babies were considered high-risk: born early, malnourished, and usually abandoned within a few hours of birth. We decided we could take that risk. After all, almost all the adopted Indian children we'd met were healthy. And besides, after so many miscarriages, we just knew adoption was going to work out perfectly.



Chandan, Dana, and their father, Peter Owens.

In June of 1982, we stood excitedly in the airport as an escort placed eight-week-old Dana Tarun Swapan in our arms. He only weighed four pounds, and measured less than 18 inches in length. He had the look of an old man in a shriveled baby's body, yet his eyes were open and alert. He seemed to take in everything around him.

The next morning I nursed him with the help of a Lact-Aid kit and an electric breast pump. Though I never produced enough milk to substitute for the bottle, I continued to nurse him for several months.

Reading through the medical records that came home with Dana, we learned that he was born almost three months early and weighed less than two and a half pounds at birth. He was severely jaundiced. His birth mother left him at the nursing home three hours after giving birth. We have since learned more: that Calcutta has "nursing homes" where women can give birth, sometimes with labor induced by drugs long before term — essentially, an abortion. These are young girls and women, often severely malnourished, poor, from lower castes, unmarried, or married and unable to support

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Judi Kloper lives in Corvallis, Oregon, with her husband and two children. (She hopes it will be three by the time this is published.) She is active in adoption issues and teaches part-time in a special education classroom.

—Sallie Tisdale

another child. Sometimes they don't know they're pregnant until they begin showing. Often, at this point, they go to the nursing home where labor is started. If the fetus-baby lives, an orphanage is summoned. This is what happened with Dana. Since he was born alive, IMH was called to take him. Other newborn babies are abandoned in doorways or the muddy streets.

Quite recently we learned a little more about Dana's first days. Apparently, he stopped breathing many times in his weeks in the IMH orphanage. At one point it was finally determined that he had died. He was wrapped in white for burial and placed in a box. (Children older than six months are cremated.) A few hours later, the orphanage workers heard a tiny cry, and quickly hurried to the box, where they discovered Dana was still alive.

As the months progressed, we realized that Dana was not developing as we felt he should, even in comparison to other premature Indian children. Our doctor dismissed our concern. However, I have a degree in Child Development and have worked with infants and preschoolers for many years. I followed my instincts and, after extensive effort, Dana was diagnosed with severe athetoid cerebral palsy, and was profoundly deaf. He would be quadriplegic. He was eight months old at this time, and weighed only nine pounds, but was happy and loving. We left no time for feeling depressed, plunging instead into physical and occupational therapies, fitting him with hearing aids and other communication systems and learning sign language. He intently watched us as our hands flew, and watched our mouths as they moved.

Though we hadn't planned to become the parents of a child with disabilities, we found in it numerous challenges, and an incredible love for our son. Dana's own determination encouraged us to push ahead, and we decided to adopt again.

This time we requested an older child who was deaf. We felt that we could easily open our hearts and home to another child with a similar need. Only a month after applying to adopt again, we received a message from India about a little boy from one of the prisons. Three months later, in November, 1983, Chandan walked off the airplane.

When we decided on adopting an older Indian child, we had only limited knowledge of the conditions many of these children live in. We knew they were in prison, which is horrifying enough. But there is so much more.

All we've known of Chandan is that he was in the Presidency Jail in West Bengal when Cherie Prakash, the director of IMH, secured his release and that of thirteen other young men. Chandan was the youngest at approximately seven years old. The other men he shared prison space with were either mentally ill, retarded, deaf, or physically disabled. "Normal" children were kept separately. Chandan had been transferred to Presidency from another prison. There was no record of where he was found, if he had parents, his name or age. He couldn't talk or understand spoken language. As far as we could tell he had never had any education. Even now, he gives no indication that he remembers a family in India.

Chandan came home with at least four different parasites, dry and greyish skin, and hair like steel wool. He scratched constantly, and had scars on his body our doctor couldn't explain. Yet he was also full of excitement, energy, and mischief.

From that first day with Chandan, the routine events and habits of our daily life were tested. A trip to the toilet initially proved confusing to him, although within a month he stopped squatting. He chewed up chicken bones, stored food in his bed and on the windowsills, and had to be taught how to brush what teeth he had left. Chandan would always overeat and then make himself vomit so he could eat more. The idea that food would always be available was incomprehensible to him. He discovered light switches, stoves, hot water, bathtubs, and new clothes. He proudly displayed his new underwear to the line at the department store. And he discovered hearing aids.

After a week of wearing two aids, he could hear the telephone ring. A few weeks later he heard the kettle whistle and the cats meowing. Some time ago, we found Chandan repeatedly flushing the toilet. He had begun to hear the sound it made, and was thrilled.

Between Chandan and Dana, we've become immersed in educational issues. We helped start a regional therapy center and, later, a preschool for hearing-impaired children. We testify before the legislature, help find interpreters, and so on. Our local school district originally wanted to place both Dana and Chandan in classrooms for retarded children, a move we opposed. Though Chandan does appear to have learning disabilities and motor problems, we don't believe he's retarded. Dana is clearly bright, and has been the victim of an old myth that people in wheelchairs are somehow mentally handicapped. At this point, we have Chandan in the state residential school for the deaf, where he stays during the week, and Dana in a hearing-impaired preschool with a personal aide.

Dana will always need an aide. He is five years old now, and weighs 22 pounds. We carry him, feed him, change him as he slowly learns toilet-training, and dress him. He has a child-size wheelchair with an attachable tray, a standing board, a knee-walker, a feeding seat, and a special potty chair. Long ago we were warned that no deaf child with cerebral palsy could learn to talk. Although we sign, and he understands us, he can't sign back because of the cerebral palsy. We have worked continually with him on speech, lip-reading, and listening, bombarding him with sound, language, and music. He now speaks, although imperfectly, reads lips quite well, and has learned to use his residual hearing. Because he has problems with breath control, he may eventually speak with a computer and voice synthesizer,

◄ An orphanage worker cares for a premature infant. Most workers have only one sick infant to care for at a time, and spend most of the day holding their charges.

▲ The author and two other women escorted these babies to their new American homes. The larger child was born at term and is of normal size; the others were premature.

but he does speak now. Just last year, Dana participated in our Community Passover Seder by asking one of the Four Questions in Hebrew.

Chandan's needs present a different kind of challenge. In most ways, however, he's just like other kids his age — he's into mischief. Last year, he happened to walk by the television as "60 Minutes" showed a short clip about Mother Teresa of Calcutta. He became extremely excited, signing and saying, "old lady, India, jail, see." We later found out that Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity sometimes visit the children in the prisons. He remembered one such visit.

Still, this child Chandan amazes us. To see a child so resilient — to live life not knowing there is a world outside, nor the feeling of a full belly, a bed, a home, or the love of a family. Yet somehow he finds an exuberance for living that should have died a long time ago.

We have always talked openly about India and the fact that our children are from there. They always enjoy looking at their arrival pictures, looking at Indian books, and meeting other Indian people. Though we know nothing about their birth parents, we do talk about the Mom and Dad that gave them life, and the reasons they were unable to rear them. For now, all seems fine.

It's now been three and one-half years since Chandan arrived. Our lives have calmed down a bit, and we are ready to adopt again. This readiness, and a desire to visit India, provided me with an opportunity this past April to escort babies home to American families. Along with another adoptive mother, I spent a few days experiencing the city our children came from.

What I saw impressed and overwhelmed me. Impressed that in this city of ten million people who live in slums and on the streets, where cows roam freely, where autos, pedestrians, bicycles, and human-drawn rickshaws travel on streets with no order — no traffic signals, signs, lanes, car lights — somehow in all this chaos life continues.

The mass poverty of the city, however, was overwhelming. Nothing can prepare a person for the shock of Calcutta.

For three days my friend and I visited, in different parts of Calcutta, three orphanages that are part of the International Mission of Hope. The first that we went to was the nursery, where 161 babies are fighting to live. At times there are close to 200 babies, and there are always more to be admitted. This is an oasis in the middle of human deprivation, at least according to my American standards. My head was spinning as I walked down the hall, in awe of the love emanating from every Indian *aya* (child care worker) and the baby each held. One room had babies weighing between one and three pounds, some of whom could fit in the palms of your hands. I watched as an *aya* respirated one two-pound boy. The baby died that night, and the next day three more took his place. Another room houses seven babies who are severely handicapped. They will most likely never be adopted. And there are rooms full

of the babies who have made it. Perhaps they're four pounds now, or maybe even nine pounds at four to six months old. They are the survivors and will eventually have families. The nursery is staffed by one *aya* for every two healthy babies, and one *aya* for each of the premature, low-birthweight, and handicapped infants. There are also some dedicated Indian doctors, one of whom is always on duty.

Each time I visited the nursery, I was overtaken by thoughts of our national selfishness: how can we Americans keep giving birth to three, four, five kids in some families? Why do some infertile couples pursue so many ways to become pregnant in order to have a child genetically like themselves? All over the world, there are infants and children already born, unwanted, into a world that doesn't seem to notice.

I also visited the two IMH orphanages for the older children. One is home for varying numbers of boys, and also for unwed pregnant girls and young women. The boys range in age from about six years old to at least twenty years. Some are mentally or physically handicapped, or both. Some are from the prisons, some from the streets. IMH also has developed a new program in Calcutta which houses and feeds the pregnant young women, and offers them good prenatal care. Usually they relinquish their babies for adoption also. The young women I met were from various areas in and outside of Calcutta — usually no one, or only one person, in their family knows of their pregnancy. They leave home for the duration of the pregnancy and birth, and when they return home, they can perhaps be matched up with a husband without anyone knowing about their pregnancy.

For me, however, the most touching visit was to the girls' orphanage. The children were in awe of our white skin. We were visitors from America, and all they knew about America was that some of their friends went to homes and families there. No sooner had I walked in the door than I was surrounded by 51 girls, ages five to twenty-five. (The older girls were deaf, with no language, but their faces glistened. They live here permanently.) Some of the girls asked in their limited English, "Me go America?" Always, arms were wrapped around me. And somehow, a little girl found her way to me. This child, who appeared so shy at first, gradually began holding my arm, then my hand, and then began smiling. We didn't speak the same language, but I knew that she was my daughter. The IMH staff person asked this child, in Bengali, if she'd like a Mom and Dad. Her dark brown eyes slowly gazed up at me, a smile spread fully across her face, and I had my answer.

The author holding Rehema, the Indian girl she is currently trying to adopt. In the lower right corner is the hand of another orphanage child trying to get in the picture.

Her name is Rehema, and she's probably about eight years old. There's very little information known, as with most of the children. She doesn't recall a family or where she'd spent most of her life. Her anticipated arrival date is September.

I returned home with two other women and six babies, all destined for homes across the United States.

International adoption has increased our awareness of the incredible needs of the world's children. While our friends continue to struggle for social change and a nuclear-free world, we shall always support them in their efforts. Yet we have chosen a different path to bring about such changes. We firmly believe that every child of every country has a right to a home and the love of a family. Whether walking the slums of Calcutta or looking through the pictures in American adoption agencies of the 250,000 children available for adoption in the United States, the need is clear. In order to love, you have to know love. At some point, international borders are meaningless, and all that seems to matter is how we can make our world a better place. We each must choose our own way.

Sometimes we cry out for a sense of normalcy in our chaotic lives — for a new car that runs, for a house that isn't falling apart, for a washing machine that washes clothes instead of the floor, for plain old PTA meetings and bake sales, for a week of peace and quiet. Yet we gave up all chances of normalcy simply by adopting from overseas. We're always on stage, it seems. We have children of a different color, we all talk with sign language, someone's hearing aid is always ringing, Dana's in a wheelchair.

Occasionally we meet people who can't believe we'd knowingly adopt a handicapped child, let alone keep the child we didn't know had handicaps to begin with. We temper our feelings toward these people, and often find ourselves in the role of educators. People ask us why we do it. Sometimes we ask ourselves. Our answer is that it has brought love and joy to our lives, and because it's one need we know we can fill. We know that down the road our lives will reach a point that excludes adopting more children. At that point, we'll commit ourselves in another way to helping these children without families. We are just like other families in most ways. We are trying to change the world one child at a time. ■

The City of Joy

This book has been received with apparently universal acclaim, but in fact has caused serious upset among the very people it describes — the inhabitants, both Indian and foreign, of certain of the worst slums in India. It is "faction," by the author's description, with identities and the chronology and juxtaposition of events changed to help the narrative flow. ***The City of Joy*** *describes the living conditions of Calcutta's poorest, most ostracized residents, and the charity work of a priest who lives among them. Lapierre tried to give $400,000 in book profits to one of the slums he describes and was rejected on the grounds he had exploited them. And now newspapers report that tourists with this book under their arms throng Calcutta, asking for rickshaw rides through the ghettos.*

The City of Joy *is indeed inspiring, heartrending and, by many accounts, painfully accurate. Exploitive? Good question.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

Hope in Hard Times

The real people who make up America's peace movement are the subject of ***Hope in Hard Times****. The profiles and the varied circumstances and motivations of the individuals portrayed left me with renewed hope in the movement's possibilities — a hope that other doubters and weary movement participants should find there as well.*

The "hard times" of the book's title are not just the seven years of the Reagan administration with its frequent glimpses of our proximity to nuclear war. Author Paul Loeb is also concerned with what could be called the organizational hard times facing the peace movement: where is the movement going after its startlingly broad emergence in the early '80s? What strategy makes sense after the first "easy" successes of the Nuclear Freeze campaign? How does the movement continue after the momentum provided by those early accomplishments now seems to have stalled?

No easy answers are offered, but dozens of strategies are presented in the course of these profiles. Loeb also sees the possibility of a broader perspective emerging from all these efforts: a movement combining dread of nuclear war with an insistence on social and economic justice as the most likely guarantors of peace. Loeb does us all a service with this hardheaded yet hopeful book.

—*Keith Jordan*

[Suggested by Shaun Sommerer]

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During the 1960s, West German theorist Rudi Dutschke proposed activists achieve their visions through what he termed "The Long March through the Institutions": working for fundamental change in each of the varied schools, offices, factories, and communities in which they settled. Parallel to village politics, and focusing specifically on workplaces and other domains of common life, this notion suggests any situation where people came together for work, play, comfort, or communication can support either debasing or humane values. Dutschke said our choices within these institutions could reinforce the separation of actions from their consequences, and the surrender of decision-making power from those directly affected to those commanding massive hierarchies and bureaucracies, or such choices could foster an understanding that coercion to "get the job done" inevitably carries a toll, and that human ends matter more than either technical invention or financial success.

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Dan talked about standing up to fear — how, when the British taxed all trade in India and forbade home manufacture, Gandhi led his march to the sea for the highly illegal action of gathering salt. "Without making a big thing of it, I have six priors, and depending on how it goes, the media and everything else, someone like me will probably get at least six months to a year."

He laughed and sipped a beer. "It's no big thing really, just a chance to stick your tongue out at them."

When asked whether these risks and costs were worth it, Dan compared the blockade to the military, as he had once before. "There's an old feeling about valiant soldiers. People revere bravery, risking one's life for friends, fighting for a purpose. I remember I was counseling a draft resister who said 'I don't believe in dying for my country; I'm going to make the other motherfucker die for his country,' and it revolted me. What happened to heroes and courage? Why can't people act to inspire each other?"

The City of Joy
Dominique Lapierre
1985; 519 pp.
$5.95
postpaid from:
Warner Books
P. O. Box 690
New York, NY 10019
or Whole Earth Access

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Max took up his forceps and his butcher's saw once more. This time he had to cut off a whole arm up to the shoulder — Anouar's arm, rotten with gangrene. No doubt there was nothing else to do; the man had been stricken for so long. In the absence of antibiotics, the infection must already have run through his whole system. Kovalski and Gabrielle laid the poor fellow on his side. A murmur of voices came from the onlookers as Max's pair of forceps, rose above the prostrate man. Max himself had the impression of cutting into a sponge, so putrefied were the skin, muscles, and nerves. The severing of a blood vessel induced a spurt of blackish blood which Sister Gabrielle mopped up with a compress. When he reached the bone just below the shoulder joint, Max changed instruments. Everyone could hear the grinding of the teeth as they bit into the wall of the humerus. After a few strokes of the saw, Max felt his legs "sinking into cotton" again. He clenched his fingers on the handle and pressed with all his might. To avoid thinking, feeling, seeing, he talked to himself. "Sylvia, Sylvia, I love you," he repeated as his hands accelerated mechanically back and forth. Like a tree, felled by a final stroke of an ax, the limb came away from the body. Neither Kovalski nor Sister Gabrielle had time to catch it before it fell onto the ground. Max put down the saw to wipe his forehead and the nape of his neck. It was then that he witnessed a scene that was to haunt him for the rest of his life: "a mangy dog carrying off in its mouth a human arm."

Hope in Hard Times
Paul Rogat Loeb
1987; 322 pp.
$10.95
($12.95 postpaid) from:
Lexington Books
D. C. Heath and Company
125 Spring Street
Lexington, MA 02173
or Whole Earth Access

OURS

"Professional couple seeks healthy Caucasian infant." That's one kind of adoption ad. ***OURS Magazine*** *has another: photos and stories of children of all ages, from many countries, without families. OURS, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization that offers a variety of assistance to adoptive families and people interested in adopting. Lists of waiting children, personal experience stories, information articles, PenPal lists for children, legal news, and more fill* ***OURS Magazine****, their publication. I read it because I'm hooked on adoption, period. If you're interested, this is an open door inside.* *—Sallie Tisdale*

OURS Magazine
Carol Kennedy,
Acting Editor
$16/year
(6 issues) from:
OURS, Inc.
3307 Hwy. 100 North
Suite 203
Minneapolis, MN 55422

Koh, In Bong is 3½ years old and still waits in Korea for a home. This bright little boy with an incredible sparkle in his eyes has cerebral palsy. In Bong pulls himself to a stand, but he can't walk until he is braced and fitted with special shoes. While speech therapy will be needed, his speech is considered to be clear and excellent and he is using appropriate three word sentences. In Bong is of at least average intelligence.

Sandie — Another little girl approximately 1 year old, in Jamica. She is in good health and living at the orphanage. She was abandoned on the beach, where she was found by police and brought to the orphanage. Nothing is known of her family.

Pen Pals

Lee Jae Pridgen, age 7
Rayville, Missouri 64084

Lee Jae is in the first grade; she was adopted from Korea. Lee Jae has two brothers and two sisters. Her hobbies are collecting stickers, reading, and writing letters. Lee Jae's special interests are cooking, playing with her dogs and cats, riding horses, and roller skating. She would like to have a pen pal close to her age.

I am writing as a bereaved parent, requesting information about adoption of children with fetal alcohol syndrome. It led to the deaths of my 9-year-old son and his 15-year-old birth brother. At the time of their adoptions, we were totally unaware that they were prenatally, and probably postnatally, exposed to toxic amounts of alcohol and other drugs. This led to a massive breakdown of their metabolic systems and eventually to death. Until coroner's and autopsy reports were submitted, we had no hint that their deaths were drug-related.

I have since been overwhelmed with requests to share our plight — in schools, churches, media, etc. in an effort to raise public awareness. I have recently been asked to create a teaching film for a nearby hospital, on adoption and foster care of alcohol- and drug-exposed children and infants. Although I am well-versed in sharing our own personal struggle and triumphs, I am really at a loss with the overall aspects of fetal alcohol syndrome. I would appreciate any input from anyone whose life has been touched by this.

Lisa Bentley

Faint Trails

If you've made the decision to search, finish crying and read this book.

I searched for my birth mother for thirteen years. Shortly before I found her I read an earlier, now-out-of-print edition of ***Faint Trails****. This, the first national edition, has a generous supply of emotional vignettes and balanced and restrained reunion stories. Aigner favours open records and tells the reader where and how to find the records available.*

Aigner also borrows the hopeful message of sci-fi writer Poul Anderson's book ***The Byworlder****, that each of us is never more than ten people away from any other person in the world.* *—Nancy Gonzales*

Faint Trails
Hal Aigner
1987; 97 pp.
$6.95
($7.95 postpaid) from:
Paradigm Press
127 Greenbrae Boardwalk
Greenbrae, CA 94904

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The term "vital statistics" describes the birth, marriage, divorce (inclusive of annulments and dissolutions), and death records routinely compiled and held by state or county governments (or both). Taken together, these run an extremely close second to city directories as the most valuable source of information and leads needed to further a search.

Overall, however, they represent a more complex and costly approach to reunification research, merely because each jurisdiction enjoys the prerogative of establishing its own policies regulating access to vital statistics information. Public access may mean that a person is entitled to personally peruse records; or it may mean that a municipal clerk will conduct records research for an individual. Fees for obtaining photocopies of certificates and other documents may vary from state to state, or county to county. Though most jurisdictions, on the basis of a name and approximate year of an event, will conduct a search for, say, a marriage certificate over a given period of years, each may make its own determination as to how many years are included in that period. As a result, the first phase of vital statistics research requires making sufficient inquiries to discover the procedures and costs entailed in the process, within a given jurisdiction.

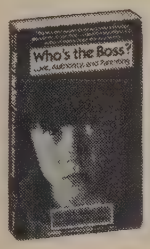
Who's the Boss?

In a society hooked on the quick-fix approach of pop psychology, I found myself skeptical about a discipline technique touted as the One-Minute Scolding. But ***Who's the Boss?*** *makes deceptively simple good sense. The authors, a child psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist, have managed to cut through to the essence of positive discipline. The One-Minute Scolding teaches children values and ways of behaving while helping them feel safe, protected and loved. Everyone learns. Everyone wins.*

—Karin Magnuson

[Suggested by Toni Garrett]

Who's the Boss?
Gerald E. Nelson, M.D.
and Richard W. Lewak
1984; 164 pp.
$6.95
($8.70 postpaid) from:
Shambhala Publications
314 Dartmouth Street
Boston, MA 02116
or Whole Earth Access



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Over an eighteen-month period we studied twenty-six children who had been taken from their natural parents because of neglect or abuse. Each had experienced multiple placements in adoptive or foster homes by the time we saw them. Each was referred for psychiatric evaluation or treatment because of pervasive maladaptive behaviors and attitudes. . . .

For Your Own Good

As the twig is bent, so grows the tree. A brutalized child will grow up to brutalize his own children. And if exacting revenge on one's own children is not enough, psychotherapist Alice Miller shows us, through analysis of the childhoods of Adolf Hitler, a drug addict, and a child-murderer, that some other terrible way to fight back will always be devised. The question is: where will the anger and hatred be focused — toward the self, or others?

Miller exposes the roots of violence in our society that are buried in child-rearing practices, making it "impossible from the very beginning to see, perceive, and evaluate what one has suffered as a child." This she calls "poisonous pedagogy." The will of the child is controlled, its pain buried in secrecy and the soul crippled; all for its own good.

Written with courage, clarity and a sense of hope for the future, ***For Your Own Good*** *taps the increased willingness of the postwar generation to seek out and face our childhood truths. It challenges us to break the conspiracy of silence and to strive toward the personal integrity that is our birthright.* *—Karin Magnuson*

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The pedagogical conviction that one must bring a child into line from the outset has its origin in the need to split off the disquieting parts of the inner self and project them onto an available object. The child's great plasticity, flexibility, defenselessness, and availability make it the ideal object for this projection. The enemy within can at last be hunted down on the outside.

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Little Adolf could be certain of receiving constant beatings; he knew that nothing he did would have any effect on the daily thrashings he was given. All he could do was deny the pain, in other words, deny himself and identify with the aggressor. No one could help him, not even his mother, for this would spell danger for her too, because she was also battered (cf. Toland).

The One-Minute Scolding		Parent	Child	
TIME	CONTENT	FEELINGS	FEELINGS	EXAMPLE
30 seconds	Statement of parent's feeling addressing child's behavior	Annoyance Irritation Angry Furious Rageful Frustrated Worried	Worried Anxious Tense Scared Dread Terrified Tearful Sorry Remorseful	Parent: I am angry with you. You hit your sister. We don't hit in this house and I get very mad with you when you forget that rule. You hurt your sister and that's not the way to deal with your frustration. That makes me frustrated and very angry with you. You simply may not hit . . . etc.
	ABRUPT CHANGE OF FEELING	DEEP BREATH TRANSITION	ANTICIPATION	Deep breath—a moment to change feeling tone:
30 seconds	Parent's loving reaffirmation of child's worth	Warm Tender Gentle Caring Hopeful Confident Loving Nurturing Clear	Surprised Relieved Confused Pleased Remorseful Secure Loved Worthy Certain	You're such a neat fellow. I know you can do better. Sometimes you remember to be so loving to your sister. I love you. I want to be a good mama for you. So you don't have to worry. Every time you forget the rule and hit your sister, I'll scold you. That will help you to remember.
	Quiz	Certain Satisfied		Why am I scolding you? / Because I hit my sister. What will I do every time you forget? / You're going to scold me. Why do I want to help you remember? / You love me. Come let's have a hug. / You want to be a good mama.
	Hug			Hug

Could it be that these children's antisocial and annoying behaviors, which constantly provoked high emotions in their parents, were some clumsy but elemental compulsion to initiate the first stage of bonding? If so, the adoptive parents were missing their cues. All of the parents revealed that eventually they resorted to one common form of response. In their annoyance and desperation, they banished the children from their proximity. "Go to your room!" or "I've had enough, I'm going out!" At the point of highly aroused feelings in both the parent and the child, the child was abandoned or distanced and the process was interrupted only to repeat itself like a needle stuck in a record. The children had achieved their feared goal: abandonment.

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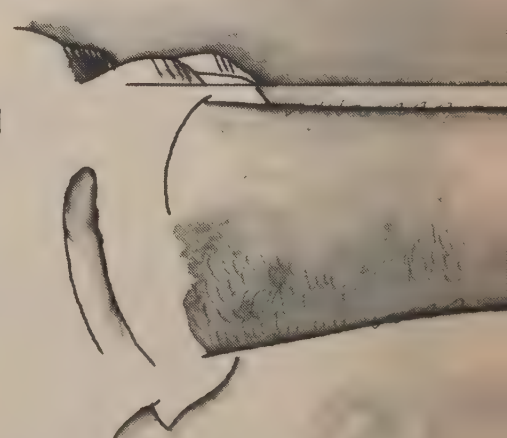
We have examined the difficulties underlying the teaching and learning of conscience. We have seen the circumstances in which conscience formation fails and we have noted that a trusting relationship between parent and child is an essential precondition for conscience formation. How do parents establish such a relationship if trust does not exist? How do they capture a temperamentally distant and manipulative child and stuff an unwanted conscience inside? How do they repair the devastation of a painful loss so that their child is receptive to their care and instruction?

This state of constant jeopardy is reflected very clearly in the fate of the Jews in the Third Reich. Let us try to imagine the following scene. A Jew is walking down the street, perhaps on his way home from buying milk, when a man wearing an SA armband attacks him; this man has the right to do anything to the Jew he wants, anything his fantasy happens to dictate and that his unconscious craves at the moment. The Jew can do nothing to alter this; he is in the same position as little Adolf once was. If the Jew tries to defend himself, there is nothing to prevent his being trampled to death. He is like the eleven-year-old Adolf, who in desperation once ran away from home with three friends, planning to float down the river on a homemade raft and thus flee from his violent father. Just for the very thought of trying to escape, he was nearly beaten to death (cf. Stierlin). . . .

For Your Own Good
Alice Miller
1980; 284 pp.
$8.95
($10.45 postpaid) from:
Harper and Row
2350 Virginia Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740
or Whole Earth Access

THE BERING BRIDGE PROJECT

by John May *Illustrated by Don Ryan*



I WANT TO BUILD A BRIDGE ACROSS the Bering Strait.

I'm not the first to have the idea. The honour for that belongs to Joseph Strauss, the man who went on to design one of the world's great bridges — the Golden Gate. In 1892, for his graduation thesis from the University of Cincinnati, he outlined his plan to build a railroad bridge across the Bering Strait.

A look at the map will show you the attractions of such an idea. The Bering Strait separates the Seward Peninsula of the Western Hemisphere from the Chukchi Peninsula of the Eastern Hemisphere and is about 85km (53 miles) wide at its narrowest point.

In the middle of the Bering Strait are two islands, Big Diomedes and Little Diomedes. Big Diomedes is 2½ miles long by 1½ miles wide and is Russian; Little Diomedes is one-third the size, is owned by the U.S., and is inhabited by about 100 Inuit.

Contained in the narrow strip of sea between these two specks of land is not only the imaginary border between the two countries but also the international date line. In other words, this small stretch of water separates North America from Asia, the Soviet Union from the United States, and today from tomorrow. The advantages of bridging that gap should be obvious to all.

For the historical record, the Strait was discovered by and named after Vitus Bering, a Dutchman who was sent by Peter the Great to explore the eastern margins of Siberia to see if it connected with North America. He successfully rounded the Peninsula on the Russian side in 1728 but completely missed seeing the North American coast due to dense fog.

Russia owned both sides of the Strait until October 18, 1867, when Captain Aleksei Peschchurov, representing the Emperor of Russia, formally sold Alaska to Brigadier General Lovell Rousseau, representing the United States, for some two cents an acre.

American popular opinion of the time held that it was an expensive deal at that price and dubbed the useless wilderness Seward's Folly after then Secretary of the Interior William Seward, whose determination led to the acquisition of these 375 million acres.

The fossil record indicates that a land bridge more than 1,000 miles wide, known as Bering Land or Beringia, existed at two different times. The first was some 65,000-35,000 years ago, after which it was submerged. It was later reestablished during the Later Wisconsin glacial period — about 28,000-25,000 years ago. This second bridge lasted for another 15,000 years before it was completely submerged by the advancing sea. Not only did it separate Alaska from Siberia, but it also cut off the Pribiloff and Aleutian Islands from continental America.

During the periods that the land was linked there were intensive migrations of plants and animals from continent to continent. The latest evidence also suggests that the original native nations of the

All the way from London, a delightful proposal for the Arctic. John May has written six books, including An Index of Possibilities, *is Editorial Director of Greenpeace Books, and is writing and producing a book on Antarctica.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

American continents (north and south) came over the land bridge from Asia in three waves of migration.

The first wave came from northern China and Mongolia some 20,000 years ago. These people were the ancestors of the Indian tribes known collectively as the Amerind, including the Aztecs, Cherokee and Algonquins.

The second wave came slightly later from north-eastern Asia, people called collectively the Na-Dene, ancestors of the Navaho and Apache Indians, the Tlingit and Haida tribes of the American Northwest. Some anthropologists believe a "third wave" of migrants arrived 10,000 years ago and became the ancestors of the modern Inuit and Aleuts. This third-wave theory is still controversial.

[Two recent articles examine these ideas in more detail: "The Ancient Bridge" by A. P. Okladnikov (*The Alaska Journal,* Autumn 1979) and "Getting One's Berings" by Knut R. Fladmark (*Natural History,* November 1986.]

Such evidence suggests a spectacular opening ceremony which might be staged when the bridge is unveiled: present-day Amerindians handing over buffalo skins, quetzal feathers and parchments in return for mammoth tusks and magic fungi from the Siberian steppes — an ancient kinship rekindled. But I am getting ahead of myself.

The superpowers have conveniently ignored their common ancestry. In 1984, for instance, a maritime boundary meeting was opened to try to update the demarcation lines as a preliminary to mineral and oil exploration in the region.

By the end of the year, talks had broken down. The stumbling block was an area of ocean south of the Strait called the Navarin Basin, situated 400 miles from the U.S. and only 150 miles from the Soviet Union. The Americans claim the basin under the 1867 deal and have sold exploration rights in 20 tracts in the disputed zone to Amoco, Arco and Union Oil. The Russians regard the sale as "provocative."

No doubt plans for the bridge would come up against this sort of international bureaucracy. I am sure one can explain the value of such a link both aesthetically, commercially, and as a means of establishing more stable relations in the world. After all, connecting the Americas with the Eurasian/European, African continental mass could be seen as plate tectonics in reverse.

Of course, there may be construction difficulties and for this I will have to take specialised advice. One colleague has suggested using "icecrete" — ordinary freshwater mixed with wood fibres for strength, poured into a skin made either of concrete or laminated plastic and then frozen and compressed tightly for extra durability and shape.

It occurs to me that perhaps the bridge could be simply conceptual — a giant hologram with lasers on both sides of the channel. Naturally, the funding could come out of the SDI budget. ■

News from the Soviet Union, both official and underground, seems almost too good to be true. Glasnost offers the possibility of reform so great as to constitute a second revolution of socialism.

The remarkable interview printed here came to us in xerox form, from friends involved in citizen diplomacy. Alexander Severukhin is the pseudonym of a man involved in a group of Soviet Leftists. He was interviewed recently in Moscow by Richard Lederer, a North American socialist student. Severukhin makes it clear that the Soviet Left has no interest in pulling the Soviet Union into capitalism, but seeks instead a renewal of socialism in its fundamental form. Such a move would change the face not only of the Soviet Union and its neighbors, but global political thought itself. —*Sallie Tisdale*

THE EMERGING LEFT WING IN THE SOVIET UNION

RICHARD LEDERER TALKS TO ALEXANDER SEVERUKHIN

How do you define yourself in Marxist terms, or, more broadly, what kinds of Marxists exist in the Soviet Union?

It is very difficult to be a Marxist in a society where the official, oppressive ideology is called Marxism.

As you know, we have an official and well-known ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which is, I think, not Marxist and not particularly Leninist. I can't say that official ideology has nothing in common with Marxism and Leninism, but the idea of the Stalinist "ethnocracy" was clear. They used Marxism and they used Leninist ideas for their own purposes, creating a new ideology using Marxism simply as a raw material from which the new, opposed, in some senses anti-Marxist, ideology was made.

One of the main requirements of official ideology is to make people believe that it is Marxist and socialist: "If we are socialists and Marxist," they say, "we can just take care of everything. You simply be patient, and wait for the promise of Marxism to be realized by us, the party." Yet there is much sentiment that is critical of Marxism. Even among people genuinely on the side of the Left, many still prefer not to call themselves Marxists simply to avoid a misunderstanding, to avoid any comparison with the official camp.

What can you tell us about the Left opposition in the Soviet Union?

I would say that the Left opposition is just emerging as a political factor. In the late 1970s and early '80s the problem was simply to prove that we actually do exist; to prove this both to our society and in some sense also for the Western Left.

Official communist ideology and the war in Afghanistan are challenged by a Soviet Left opposition.

The position of the dissident emigres has been that in the Soviet Union there is absolutely no socialist opposition; that it disappeared after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It *was* true, that the old-style reformist communist opposition disappeared. Our task was to begin from the very beginning, from almost nothing. No, from less than nothing, because a socialist ideology was considered something old-fashioned, even reactionary. Stalinists had managed to make most intellectuals anti-socialist. But at the same time, right-wing dissidents and emigres showed that their own so-called solutions were even more totalitarian and Stalinist than official Stalinism. It was a kind of inverted, anti-communist Stalinism. Solzhenitsyn is a very typical example. But many others, still inside the Soviet Union, are also inverted Stalinists.

The younger generation realized that anti-communist dogmatism is no better than communist dogmatism, and among some of us there was a revolt against both types. There existed a need to find basic principles for a new left-wing thought in the Soviet Union: to study the Western left-wing tradition; to study the tradition of Russian socialist thought; to study our own concrete experience and work out ways of solving our own problems and to find a kind of synthesis. I would not say that this has already been achieved, only that there is a process — a process of synthesizing

different left-wing traditions. People considered to be left-wing in the Soviet Union don't think of themselves as "social democrats" or "revolutionary Marxists" or whatever, they think of themselves as "people of the Left." It isn't necessary to specify a tendency or tradition because the idea is to overcome divisive elements in the tradition — to find a nonsectarian left-wing ideology. We are trying to integrate ideas of so-called market socialism, ideas of self-management, of revolutionary Marxism and so on.

There is a question that often comes up when Western socialists speak of our relations with socialists in the East. That is, a large sector of our Left sees support for Eastern European political prisoners as, ironically, objective collaboration with the Right.

I know of the problem, and have discussed it with my English friends. I think this is sometimes unavoidable. But it is better to avoid it. Sometimes it is unavoidable simply because if someone is in prison you must help them by any means possible. But this is only the case for prisoners . . .

How does your movement relate to right-wing dissidents in the Soviet Union?

Right-wing activity is almost dead. Almost everyone who was active on the Right is either silent, in prison, or in the West. It is important to say that it is dead not because of repression — although this has been severe. But some years before, following repression, there were younger activists who joined and reproduced the movement in the next generation. But now, since 1979, very few young people have been joining that trend; this creates a crisis for them because they have no fresh blood. But perhaps their movement may re-emerge later if there are specific reasons or conditions.

But there are liberal and democratic elements, you have said, which are not socialist.

Yes. But we must try to integrate those elements into the "broad Left." The right-wing emigres say that dissent is dead. That is not so. Dissent is reorganized — in the process of being restructured. But right-wing dissent *is* dead, which is the real issue. That is why right-wing emigres prefer to say that all dissent is dead.

What about connections between Soviet and Eastern European Left oppositionists? How strong are these?

Very few. We have more, in fact, with the Western Left. This is very unfortunate. We had some connections with the Solidarity movement in Poland, but these were very limited. Our impression, unfortunately, is that the Eastern European Left is very highbrow and believes that in the Soviet Union no Left *should* exist. . . .

They prefer to view the Soviet Union as many Third World nations view American imperialism: the image of a complete enemy. This makes it very difficult to establish links. It is unfortunate that such an important question has such a short answer for the present time.

The people begin to solve their own problems by themselves, without any force from outside. They have the power of weapons in their own hands.

What can you say about the position of the Soviet working class?

It is important to remember that the Soviet working class is very different from the traditional Western understanding of the working class or proletariat in general, because the Soviet working class was produced by rapid industrialization under the conditions of a totalitarian state. . . . Friends of mine who have tried to explore the real nature of social relationships in the factory have discovered that there are a lot of ties connecting workers with administration. We call these "corruptive ties," ties connecting them with the bureaucracy and with lower levels of management.

To be compared with "corporate unionism" in the West, or a kind of class collaboration?

Not collaboration. No. There are simply often common corruptive interests. For example, workers are not very disciplined or productive and the administration will ignore this fact. At the same time, workers don't protest when they are underpaid, or when their rights are ignored by the administration, because management also ignores their own bad behavior.

In that situation there are a lot of ties that are not class ties but rather anti-class ties. They are very real, not something invented to spoil the working class, but something organically developed by the system. Nevertheless, class ties also exist, and these are more and more developed within the process of social development. We maintain that there is a real working class in the Marxist sense, structurally organized along the lines of skilled, qualified labor. For the qualified working class the main interest is in the idea of reform. Democratization, and the type of reform characterized by the Czechoslovakian experience; or perhaps, to begin with, the Hungarian model, later developing toward something more radical. . . .

For unqualified labor, the main idea is justice. This sector seeks justice, but doesn't think very much about reform. The problem for the Left is somehow to integrate these tendencies ideologically. To integrate the idea of justice and the concept of reform — that is the theoretical task of the Left.

What possibilities exist for you to do concrete work, to propagandize, to form yourselves as a movement?

Because of reasons you can easily understand, I don't wish to be specific about concrete actions. I can only speak about these problems in a more general way (and perhaps this is also more to the point).

The 27th Party Congress made a great deal of promises to the people. At the same time, it is clear that the system is not capable of fulfilling these promises. The idea now is to

exploit the official promises to the fullest extent possible. That is why, at least for the time being, we have some possibility of legal work. The main trend in our activity now is to work legally, but to organize ourselves in a somewhat conspiratorial way because even legal work must be organized in a way that is not publicized. Otherwise it will be quickly destroyed.

Perhaps we could turn to more general problems. You have mentioned certain tendencies toward crisis of a social and political kind. What economic problems are most significant in this period?

Economic tendencies are already well known in the West. The drop in oil prices accompanied by the decrease in production creates a very unfavorable situation for the Soviet economy. In some ways this is crucial because Brezhnev oriented the economy toward oil exports. These exports were necessary to pay for Western technology, and for grain — two elements which were used to support internal stability.

Brezhnev's idea was to solve difficulties with oil production partially by means of atomic energy. Since the Chernobyl events it is clear that the atomic energy program will not compensate for these shortcomings in the system. It has become clear that the systemic weaknesses are stronger than any objective circumstances. By this I mean, for example, that we had resources, but we have now managed to get rid of these and produce shortages instead. Then, there was an atomic energy program — and now that is also in difficulties.

A second problem is that of machinery. Equipment in Soviet plants is not only theoretically out of date, it is physically too old — at this point the machines are literally falling apart. Economists believe that by the end of the eighties, because of this factor, it will be very difficult just to keep the economy going. In other words, there is a level on which the system itself is making all adopted decisions counterproductive — is destroying the process of decision-making. It is a particular moment of the system's natural development, a qualitative moment.

There is a Marxist law — the contradiction which may arise between the forces of production and the relations of production. Relations of production in the Soviet Union are not only in contradiction to the productive forces, but are actually destroying any real development of the productive forces beyond a limited minimal level. In the long term this contradiction is fatal to the system.

The only way out is a kind of reform — but a reform that can only be realized through a social struggle. Social struggle is not something that takes place between factions, as you know, but between classes. Sooner or later this struggle will be radicalized, and will involve broad masses of the population. That's why reformism is the only way to be revolutionary here. We must support the reformists' initiatives, seeking to make them *popular* initiatives, trying to get support for them from the grass roots. Those initiatives once receiving support from the grass roots are no longer "reformist" — they become revolutionary.

People considered to be left-wing in the Soviet Union don't think of themselves as "social democrats" or "revolutionary Marxists" or whatever, they think of themselves as "people of the Left."

Because they are under an impulse from outside themselves?

Yes. They become part of a spontaneous movement. The main task is to explain to the people that they themselves must do something to cure the evils of the system. Even if they support some aspect of the system and are not seeking to destroy it. They must be engaged in the life of the society. Then that social life will produce something new; it will "reproduce" or change those people who are engaged in it.

In the West many analysts assign a significant role to the national question as a source of potential instability in the Soviet Union. What is your view of this?

I don't think the national question is the main problem — though it certainly does exist. A different degree of Russification exists in each republic. Perhaps the most backwards republics can be said to have gained from being "colonized," from having been included in the system. The most advanced, on the other hand, feel themselves held back, more or less. For example, when you discuss Azerbaijan in terms of Russification, it is not hard to guess that this is in some respects a positive development, a form of modernization.

Interestingly, the official policy of creating local national elites *creates* the problem of nationalism at the same time. This is not a struggle of oppressed nationalities against Russians; in many republics it is really a factional struggle between bureaucracies, which want to have more rights and possibilities inside the system. For many bureaucrats, for instance in Azerbaijan or Uzbekistan, the most important thing about their national feelings is to get control of posts now occupied by Russians.

Western speculation about the Soviet Union being almost broken apart by various nationalisms is simply not correct. There are many problems and many dangers for the system, but nationalism is not the greatest danger. It might, perhaps, work with others, complementing them.

How might the national question be said to relate to other tendencies towards crisis in the system?

I am not a specialist on national problems except perhaps on the Baltic republics, which I have attempted to study in greater detail. But my feeling is that the high point for specifically national movements has already passed in most of the republics. Now people

are more concerned with general problems of the system as a whole. I see this as a positive development. This is not to say that national questions are no longer important. On the contrary, they are very important. But they are more and more integrated into the general problem of the system's crisis.

It is interesting that in the official reformist tendencies, those operating legally, one can see both the ecologist tendency, and another tendency which is moving to the Left — toward self-management. But the nationality problem is still not taken up by any reformist tendency. It is mostly used by the dissidents. One of the ideas of our groups is to integrate different tendencies and demands into a generalized radical reform movement which can later become something more than a reform movement. But great attention must still be paid to the national problem in an effort to understand what different nationalities really want, and how those national demands can be integrated into more general reforms.

I think that more freedom is better for everybody, and greater freedom in the sense of self-government, is necessary also to solve the national problems. Decentralization, liberalization — these two reformist ideas — are already moving in a positive direction.

If a Soviet military victory is out of the question in Afghanistan, what possibilities which offer a progressive solution exist inside the country?

I don't think that the genuine Left factions of the Afghan resistance are strong. Maybe Astan Amali has a following in the minority national regions. But the liberal and progressive factions of the Islamic parties are strong. And what is much more important is that the Afghan emigration (to Pakistan) does not represent the real equilibrium of forces inside Afghanistan. Inside the country (and Soviet military personnel coming back from Afghanistan support this view) there is a process of change going on. The victory of the rebels would not mean a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo. On the contrary, there is an important process of change taking place at the grass-roots level. Otherwise, without this, the resistance would be incapable of fighting the Soviet army efficiently.

The most exciting circumstance is that of Commander Massoud of the Panshir region, with whom the official Soviet authorities are forced to negotiate. (And, by the way, they have a strong respect for him.) The resistance that is operating inside the country is therefore a very good possibility as a political force to inherit power from the Karmal regime. The problem is that now the resistance depends on Western aid more than it did some years ago. This means that outside influence in Afghanistan is growing.

When speaking of the Western Left, I think it is very important to have ties with the Afghan resistance and to help strengthen the progressive tendencies inside the resistance against the reactionary tendencies as much as possible. The Western Left as a *combined* force *is* able to influence the situation. Why give the Afghan resistance up to Reagan and other reactionaries? Why give them the possibility of being influential without attempting to conquer a political space, to contest that influence? It seems that the Western Left has lost a lot of opportunities in this way — but not all possibilities. Because there still is a chance.

The only way out is a kind of reform — but a reform that can only be realized through a social struggle. Social struggle is not something that takes place between factions, but between classes.

Here in the Soviet Union, the problem is to mobilize popular pressure against the war. It's very difficult — the situation here is not unlike the United States during the Vietnam War period but there have been some demonstrations and revolts — even if these were not effective. Nevertheless, they show that pressure exists and is very real. It should be mentioned here that at least one article by a Soviet observer, writing under a pseudonym, has appeared in, I believe, the Washington Post — which gives specific details of the demonstrations against the war.

The second point is a need to lobby the official reformist circles. This is something which we do and will continue to do. . . . Maybe this kind of activity is not the most traditional for leftists, but it is a necessary activity in the current, specific situation. That is, trying to influence the reformers and trying to give them concrete ideas on how to get out of Afghanistan, because it will be more difficult to get out later.

How do you regard the position that social progress being introduced by the Soviet Union is something which objectively justifies the invasion?

Well, I think Marx had interesting things to say about the role of the British in India — that objectively the British presence assisted in the modernization of India. But at the same time, from the moral standpoint, there is no reason to say that the British are in the end *right* to invade and colonize India. The progress, it must be said, initiated by the British invasion of India finally helped the process of social transformation, but the invasion itself, as a moral fact, cannot be justified by such a final result.

A result is not only (well, now I begin to "interpret" Marx) produced by an invasion — but is produced by the invasion and the *resistance* to the invasion. This is my view of Afghanistan. The final result in Afghanistan is something that will be produced by the invasion and by the resistance to the invasion.

Do you mean that a counterrevolutionary role is played by Soviet forces and that a revolutionary resistance could develop in answer to that?

Yes. I should say that the Taraki regime was not revolutionary or socialist in any way. It was a technocratic, modernizing regime along the lines of the Shah's regime in Iran. The Shah's regime was, however, more organic and technically pro-Western, though it had good relations with the Soviet Union. Taraki's regime, also like the Shah's, had almost no social base except in a limited strata of the military bureaucracy. It was from the very beginning dependent on Soviet aid, political and military. You cannot speak of that regime in terms of social progress. It was antisocial because it tried to impose a model of development on the society against the will of the society. There followed a revolt of the society as in Iran, and as in Iran it was a combined revolt of progressive and reactionary forces — all of whom had one common aim: to get rid of that regime which was destroying the society as a whole.

That is why it is a kind of national liberation struggle; and it is also true that in it are also counterrevolutionary fundamentalist elements. It is a combined revolt of an integral society against elements which were introduced by foreign influence — and when those elements were almost smashed by the resistance, there appeared an open foreign invasion, which is also destroying the social fabric, the social life of the society. You cannot introduce real social progress by destroying the entire structure of a society by military force.

We don't know anything about real social progress in Afghanistan. There is a Russian term, "Potemkin Village," that means an appearance created to influence the opinion of foreigners. The main role played by the Soviet Army is military. They don't even try to do anything to give the people, the masses, a say in how the country is run, simply because the people are against them. So it's a very strange kind of social progress which is against the will of the people. It is not progress. It is reaction. It is anti-popular.

At the same time, the resistance itself produces the momentum of a social movement. The people begin to solve their own problems by themselves, without any force from outside. They have the power of weapons in their own hands. They organize their own social structure. It is interesting that in the beginning the idea was to destroy the Muslim clergy, the traditional aristocracy, the landlords and so on. They were expelled from the country — but the state simply took their place without any basic change in the social relation between oppressor and oppressed — one oppressor simply took the place of another. Then, when the Karmal regime and now the Najib regime fail to suppress the popular resistance, they are trying to find some kind of reconciliation — but with whom? Not with the people, but with tribal chieftains, with some elements of the clergy, with the so-called "progressive landlords," and also with elements of the bourgeoisie collaborating and trading with the Soviet Union.

The victory of the Afghan rebels would not mean a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo. On the contrary, there is an important process of change taking place at the grass-roots level.

You can read, in the Soviet Press, about an il literate landlord who started out in oppositio to the regime, but then realized that the government was not dangerous to him and now he supports the revolution — and why? Because now, for some traditional elements of the Afghan military class, it is better to suppor the current regime than the social movement because the regime is no longer perceived as dangerous for them, and the peasants, who have weapons and know how to defend them selves, are more dangerous in that situation.

What kind of possible outcome do you see arising from the war? What would be the best solution from your point of view — an what might be the worst?

I'm afraid there are a lot of "worst possibilities." But I also see two or three better possibilities. To be truthful, I am afraid of a Afghan Kampuchea. One cannot avoid think ing of the possibility of fundamentalists takin the upper hand and destroying the society using Khomeini methods with Pol Pot's effi ciency. A possible mixture of Pol Potism and Khomeinism is not to be excluded, especially if the Left Wing and liberal public does nothin for the most progressive elements of the resistance. Second, there is the possibility of a "reactionary reconciliation" — the most reactionary elements of the Babrak regime such as "progressive landlords" uniting with some reactionary elements of the resistance forces and of the society in general — and such a reactionary reconciliation is possible, although I don't think that could be for the Soviet government a kind of way out — to Afghanize the struggle — to leave Afghans fighting among themselves and withdraw. That is very dangerous.

On the other hand, there are positive element There is a possibility of real dialogue. But fo this to happen, the Soviet government will have to say that the so-called "bandits" are not bandits but armed peasants, and we mus speak to *them* first of all. There is also the possibility of a withdrawal without any pre condition if the situation inside the Soviet Union were very bad. In that case, I cannot say what would happen in Afghanistan, excep that the civil war would probably continue.

Of course, there are other possibilities of civilized compromise between the factions. There are many possible roads that are still open, but we must recognize that there are many dangers.

The only possibility I exclude absolutely is the possibility of a military victory on the Soviet side. I don't exclude the possibility of a military defeat now, because the army is in a very bad state. I have learned a lot from people coming back, but I can't even imagin the possibility of a military success by an army which is so seriously demoralized by that colonial war. ■

AFGHANISTAN

Kevin Kelly

SUPERPOWERS' BLIND SPOT

BY ROBERT CABOT AND ROBERT FULLER

Holocausts are not simply things that bad people do. They are also things that good people let happen. They are like plagues, occurring when there is a breakdown in public vigilance and hygiene. Holocausts occur in blind spots. No perpetrator can weather the damage to self-image and international reputation that follows once the truth about what is happening becomes widely known.

The Jewish Holocaust remained virtually invisible because it took place in a world that was blinded by its own anti-Semitism — not of the sort that would conceive of and carry out a "final solution," but rather of the sort that would stand by and allow the catastrophe to unfold. There was a willingness to let others do the dirty work, as one's own secret prejudices were writ large in the form of a gruesome reality. In addition, there were widespread pacifism and isolationism — a reaction to the horror of World War I — which militated against involvement in anyone else's business, regardless of how great the crimes, and made appeasement a national policy.

During the last seven years, five million Afghans have been driven out of their homeland and left to live as refugees in poverty, the education of their next generation aborted. This represents almost one third of the country's pre-war population. The dislocation of people within its borders is also catastrophic. Estimates of the dead range from one to two million.

That guerrillas can win only if they "swim in the sea of the people" is a lesson learned from Mao. That sea is being drained. Afghanistan is being depopulated. The spectre of holocaust haunts us again.

Now it is *our* generation that is standing by as the genocide in Afghanistan occurs. There are those who are not displeased that the Soviets, the "bad guys," are doing something that incontrovertibly demonstrates their badness. Their satisfaction is bolstered by a realization that the continuing war is a bleeding wound that weakens the Soviet Union. And there are those who have been saying that it is not fair or accurate to characterize the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." Believing that this is the truth that most urgently required recognition, they have been reluctant to criticize Soviet actions. Denunciation of the genocide in Afghanistan has been left to those who predictably denounce the Soviets, and accordingly, the message has been discounted. To do otherwise seemed to jeopardize improving superpower communications at a time when the world was threatened with an even greater holocaust — nuclear holocaust.

Now, however, there is a widening perception that both sides want to step back from that precipice. An abatement of the fear of nuclear war that has blinded us to the genocide underway in Afghanistan enables us — and perhaps also the Soviets — to begin to see it for what it is: *the loss of a people and a culture.*

The improved prospects for arms control provide the basis for addressing together what is happening in Afghanistan. It is not hard to imagine using the leverage inherent in the Afghan situation to design and win acceptance for a treaty barring superpower involvement in all regional conflicts, a treaty that would protect the United States, the Soviet Union, and their potential victims from future Vietnams and Afghanistans. It is hard to imagine a greater contribution to world peace than superpower agreement to curtail competition for the allegiance of states, in Southeast and Southwest Asia, in southern Africa, in Central America, in Central Europe, and in the Middle East. Such an agreement would in turn make possible real, lasting progress on arms control — conventional and nuclear. If, from the sobering experiences of the Vietnamese war of two decades ago and the Afghan war of today, there emerged verifiable agreement on the part of the superpowers that they would in future not interfere in regional conflicts, then those struggles would come to mark an historical turning point in Soviet-American relations.

The United States is in a uniquely strong position to help end the Afghan conflict: first, because it has already suffered the parallel humiliation of Vietnam; second, because it can offer assurances that Soviet withdrawal will not be turned to its own geopolitical advantage; and third, because the United States could couple Soviet withdrawal and a commitment not to introduce troops and arms elsewhere with its own commitment to do likewise. This, more than anything else, could provide the Soviets with something positive, the victory they have failed to win in Afghanistan, but may need in order to extricate themselves. At stake are the very existence of a culture and a people, the honor of the United States and the Soviet Union, and the opportunity of reducing the gravest threats to a lasting peace. ■

Sovieticus

This slim volume by a Princeton professor is a wonderful tonic for cases of East-West media overdose. It began as a series of occasional columns in ***The Nation****; they continue today, and this book collects most of those written through early 1985. Cohen's bias for detente is less important than his bias in favor of historical perspective. The changes occuring in the Soviet Union are far more fascinating than the demonology produced by either side's propaganda machines, but without perspective they remain murky or get distorted into 90-second TV segments. If nothing else, this examination of the Soviet political machine will give American readers a new sense of the term "entrenched bureaucracy."* —*Richard Nilsen*

Sovieticus
(American Perceptions of Soviet Realities)
Stephen F. Cohen
1985; 160 pp.

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■

No Soviet leader since Stalin has had the power to impose major changes on the state bureaucracy, which has, since the 1960s, sabotaged several reforms in the process of implementing them. Important segments of the Communist Party, the other administrative bureaucracy, share their counterparts' vested interests. Nor is there any large constituency for change among ordinary citizens, most of whom are deeply conservative, as Soviet pollsters have discovered. Reformers, based mainly in the scientific and cultural intelligentsia, argue that plant managers, technicians and workers want economic decentralization. In reality, most plant bosses and employees probably prefer the existing system, which guarantees superfluous jobs, rewards inefficiency and holds no one personally responsible.

•

American ["hard line"] policies are inherently counterproductive because they ignore basic truths about the Soviet Union today. Whatever else may be characteristic of Soviet leaders, they are intensely proud of their country's great-power status, achieved only in their lifetime and at enormous cost, and thus they are profoundly resentful of any perceived challenge to its international prestige.

Confronted with assertions of American superiority, preachments about their own "illegitimacy" and "evil" and ultimatums designed to "punish" them, Soviet leaders will always resort to an uncompromising line, regardless of the hardships involved. Despite their longstanding need for an arms control agreement, for example, they walked out on the talks on European missiles in 1983. And since that visceral reaction to American bombast is widespread among officials and ordinary citizens alike, it strengthens, rather than weakens, the leadership's position at home.

The hard-line goal of reforming the Soviet system through relentless cold war, including an uncontrolled arms race, is even more ill-conceived. We may wish for a liberalized outcome, but the United States does not have the wisdom, the power or the right to intervene in internal Soviet politics. Attempts to do so will always cause more harm than good.

Such efforts are doomed partly because they are predicated on wildly exaggerated conceptions of Soviet domestic problems. In reality, the Soviet Union is not in economic crisis; nor is it politically unstable.

Imported Publications

*Finding the truth in times of conflict can be impossible, and I'll generally settle for just getting two different sides on a controversial happening and then making my own decisions. This need for information becomes even more important in larger issues, such as our government's relationship with the USSR, purported to be the Evil Empire. I've decided that hearing from the other side is downright mandatory. Best of all would be packing my bag for a visit, but finances dictate other means. Shortwave radio gives me Radio Moscow in English, and now there's Russian TV (****WER*** *#50), if only I had a satellite dish.*

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FOR OLDER CHILDREN

THE ADVENTURES OF DENNIS, Dragunsky, V. Dennis is a good-natured, cheerful and honest little boy who never loses courage. The story tells the reader about his likes and dislikes, about a little girl gymnast in the circus who smiled at him — him alone! — and waved her hands, about how Dennis ventured to jump into the swimming pool from the very highest diving board, and his many other adventures. (SU) 1983-8
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THE ADVENTURES OF PENCIL AND SCREWBOLT, Druzhkov, Yu. The story of Pencil, the artist, and Screwbolt, the clever mechanic. (SU) 1097-0
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CHIK AND HIS FRIENDS, Iskander, F. Five short stories—"Chik's Day," "Drinking Tea and Love of the Sea," "Animals in Town," "The Revenge," and "Chik's Defense"—by a modern Soviet writer well known for his feel for child psychology, good humor, and paradox. (SU) 3031-9
281324 Hardcover 198 pp. **$7.95**

Snow Lion Publications

Tremendous suffering has resulted from the 37-year Chinese occupation of Tibet, but good has come as well: Tibetan culture and tradition are not only flourishing in India, but in the West as well. So long isolated, Tibet is now a global, mobile country. Its people and ideas are accessible to Westerners now as never before. Snow Lion Publications is one example.

Snow Lion publishes, reviews, and distributes a long list of books about all aspects of Tibetan culture, philosophy, and history. The list includes many books written in Tibetan and translated with the assistance of lamas. Postcards, religious supplies, and films are also available. The Snow Lion catalog runs stories and interviews as well.
—Sallie Tisdale

Snow Lion Publications Catalog
Sydney Piburn and Jeff Cox, Editors

free from:
Snow Lion Publishers
P. O. Box 6483
Ithaca, NY 14581

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The Sound of Wisdom
Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, music is regarded as a vehicle of inner transformation, a meditative discipline for cultivating the wisdom and compassion of a Buddha. *Gyuto Tantric College*, founded in 1474 A.D. in Tibet, has evolved a special chanting technique which enables each monk to produce a low fundamental tone and two or three of its overtones simultaneously. This "deep sound" is believed to convey the blessings of the tantric deities. Although these rituals involve inner practices that are not revealed to the uninitiated, it is still considered to be very beneficial to observe their external aspects.

The ONE WORLD MUSIC Festival of Sacred Chant was a unique and unprecedented event that brought together 11 Tibetan Buddhist monks from Gyuto Tantric College with new music composers Philip Glass, David Hykes, Pauline Oliveros, and Terry Riley. In performances and symposia, the two-day festival focused on the connections between ancient ritual and contemporary music, and the impact of Asian traditional culture on Western consciousness.

The Nuer

The best ecology and anthropology ever written. How yearly changes and the network of kinship form a web that is almost unbelievable to today's industrialized "contracted" families. The Nuer follow the flooding of the Nile with their cattle that are both worshiped and kept as a source of wealth for purchasing wives. —Peter Warshall

The Nuer
Edward E. Evans-Pritchard
1940; 271 pp.
$9.95
($11.45 postpaid) from:
Oxford University Press
16-00 Pollitt Drive
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
or Whole Earth Access

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A further range of permutations is created by prefixes which denote the sex or age of an animal, e.g. *tut*, bull, *yang*, cow, *thak*, ox, *nac*, heifer, *ruath*, male calf, *dou*, female calf, *kol*, calf which has not yet begun to graze, and so forth. Thus one may speak of a *tut ma kar looka, dou ma rial, thak ma cuany*, &c. Indeed, if we were to count every possible mode of referring to animals of the flocks and herds they would be found to number several thousand expressions — an imposing and complicated system of ramifications which bears eloquent witness to the social value of cattle.

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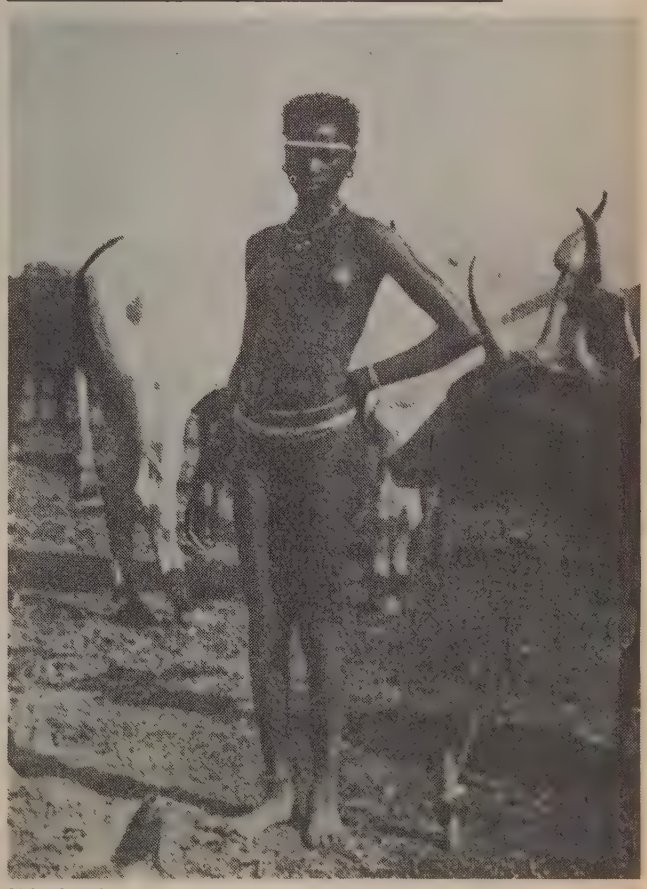
The necessity of a mixed economy follows from the oecological equilibrium. Rinderpest prevents complete dependence upon milk foods; climate prevents complete dependence on grain; and hydrological variations prevent complete dependence on fish. These three elements together enable Nuer to live, and their seasonal distribution determines Nuer modes of life at different periods of the year.

•

How strong is tribal sentiment may be gathered from the fact that sometimes men who intend to leave the tribe of their birth to settle permanently in another tribe take with them some earth of their old country and drink it in a solution of water, slowly adding to each dose a greater amount of soil from their new country, thus gently breaking mystical ties with the new. I was told that were a man to fail to do this he might die of *nueer*, the sanction that punishes breach of certain ritual obligations.

•

It is difficult to find an English word that adequately describes the social position of *diel* in a tribe. We have called them aristocrats, but do not wish to imply that Nuer regard them as of superior rank, for, as we have emphatically declared, the idea of a man lording it over others is repugnant to them. On the whole — we will qualify the statement later — the *diel* have prestige rather than rank and influence rather than power.



Girl in kraal.

METEOR DEFENSE

BY BOB KOBRES

This meteor exploded during its descent through the atmosphere. Photographed in 1895 with a 2-inch lens.

Meteor Crater near Flagstaff, Arizona, is about 3,900 feet in diameter and 650 feet deep. It was formed about 25,000 years ago; the impact released 5-20 megatons of kinetic energy.

IN HIS ARTICLE "A Gaian Politics" (*WER* #53, p. 4), historian William Irwin Thompson asks what would be the slightest and subtlest of moves that could transform our present political environment from one of terror to a life-centered polity of compassion. He goes on to say that the martial arts teach us to appraise the situation as given and look for ways to redirect the energies manifested toward positive goals. As an example, Thompson suggests that the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) could be transformed into a transnational program for the exploration of space.

But would the mysteries of Mars provide sufficient cement to bind opposing parties long enough for their mutual paranoia to wane? Thompson laments that, even if desired, transformation is difficult for a nation with an economy built around preparation for war. The military component must be reduced slowly as employment is shifted to other areas — a task next to impossible without government subsidies. The problem, he states, "is that citizens and politicians will only vote for subsidies under threat, and so there always has to be a threat from the enemy or the environment to mobilize a society."

Now that we have *all these nifty weapons and satellites and radar, what can we* do *with them? Another version of a Better Game Than War. Bob Kobres is a librarian at the University of Georgia, and spends his free hours "solving puzzles," like Star Wars. For more information on a non-profit group pursuing the following proposal, send a SASE to ProEDEN & spACELINK, 1233 Boulevard, Athens, GA 30601.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

If we need an external threat to bring us together, we need only look toward the stars. It's a sobering thought when one realizes that a stony object only 350 meters in diameter colliding with Earth at what is considered to be an average impact velocity of 25 km per second would liberate the energy equivalent of 5,000 megatons TNT within our environment. In other words, a hunk of rock that could be nestled into a modern sports arena could release an amount of energy 250,000 times as great as the 20-kiloton nuclear device that destroyed Hiroshima. This is a definite "nuclear winter" level — 5,000 megatons is often used as a typical exchange figure in nuclear war scenarios.

An event of this magnitude is not in the same class as the hypothetical 100,000,000-megaton event that polished off the dinosaurs, but it would most certainly throw civilization into a dark age. Our climate would be seriously perturbed; growing crops out in the open would be next to impossible for the first year and frustrating for years to come. Famine would be global. All in all, it would not be unlike enduring a nuclear war; the ozone layer would be depleted, disease would be rampant, governments would collapse.

British astronomers Victor Clube and Bill Napier, in their *The Cosmic Serpent* (1982), give 1900 years as a typical interval for a collision of this magnitude. These astronomers work at the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh. Their estimate carries with it two important implications. One is that since we can be pretty sure no event of this magnitude has occurred during the historical period (the last 2,500 years), we are statistically overdue for such a wallop. The other implication is that we should not be surprised to find that earlier civilizations have been brought down by cosmic collision. We must no longer glibly assume that the ancients were talking through their hats when their writings spoke of fire coming down from heaven and destroying whole cities.

The Tunguska object that hit Russia in 1908 could have easily wiped out a city. In fact, if the Earth had been advanced in its rotation by about 71 degrees (4 hours and 45 minutes) the object would have vented its 15- to 30-megaton blast over Leningrad (then St. Petersburg). Considering that the actual downward-directed blast scorched and leveled 2,000 square kilometers (700 sq. mi.) of dense Siberian forest, cremating the wildlife within, and produced a shock wave that traveled completely around the world twice, it is safe to assume that few if any of the city's two million inhabitants would have survived. Such an event would have changed recent history.

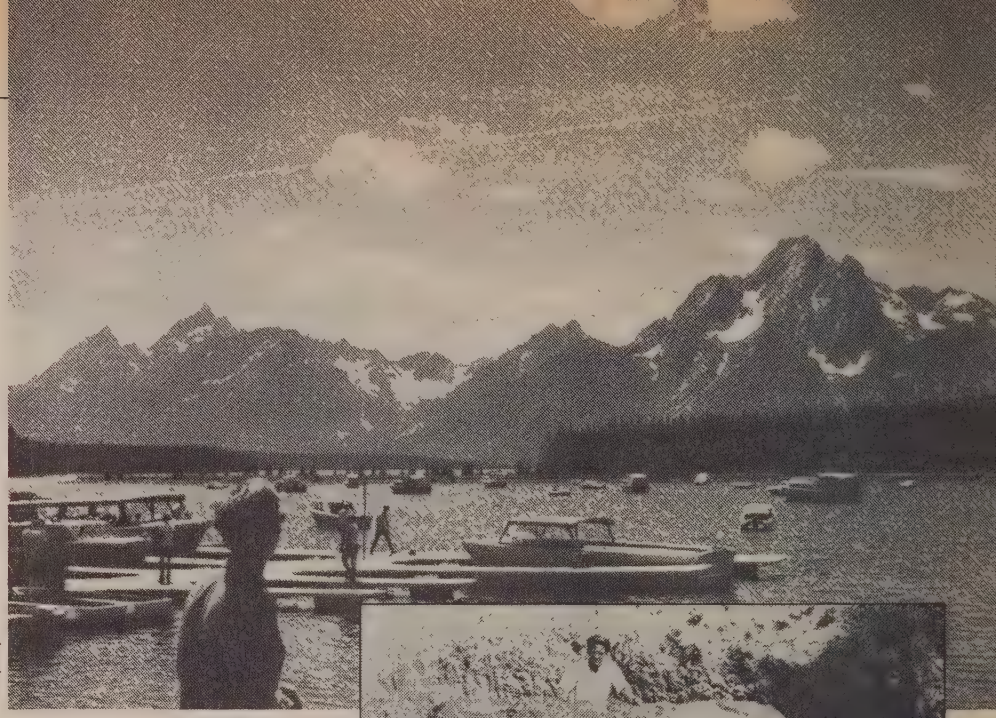
Plato was aware of cosmic collisions and held them responsible for losses of history. In his *Timaeus,* Plato states that the myth of Phaethon (son of the Sun who burns up the natures of the Earth) is in reality true as it expresses the mutations of the bodies revolving about the Earth and indicates that, at infrequent intervals, a destruction of terrestrial natures ensues from the devastations of fire.

In 1908 the Tunguska object struck Siberia with a 15-30 megaton blast that flattened 700 square miles of dense forest.

Iron meteorite found in Oregon.

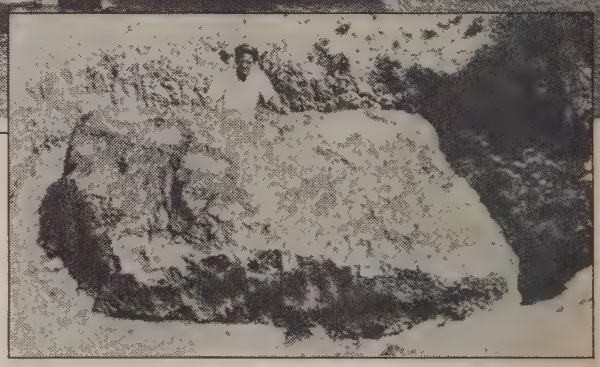
The Mystery of Comets

Clube and Napier have developed a very credible scenario that supports Plato's contention. They postulate that around 5,000 years ago a large comet, perhaps 20 km in diameter, was perturbed by Jupiter into a short period orbit which intersected our own planet's orbit. A comet of this size will inevitably break up, leaving in its path debris of varying sizes and shapes. Since this comet was crossing the orbit of Earth, at least once a year our planet would have to careen its way through this debris path producing a spectacular meteor shower about the same time every year. Most of the larger comet pieces (100 to 1,000 meters across) would be found not too far away from the original comet at first, but the force



A meteor skimming the atmosphere over Wyoming in 1972. This object continued into space.

The Mystery of Comets



The heaviest known meteorite is the Hoba West in Namibia. Though difficult to determine exactly because the object is buried in limestone, it is believed to weigh about 60 tons.

The Atlas of the Universe

— be it rotation or gas pressure — that separated them initially would still be with them, so they would continue to drift away from the main berg. From the standpoint of the Earth, what had been a rifle bullet became a load of buckshot. Clube and Napier speculate that while streaking through this dense swarm close to the comet, the Earth could have encountered, in the course of half an hour, thirty impacts in the range of 10 to 100 megatons with perhaps a few in excess of this!

By combining astronomical facts with archaeological evidence, such as ancient calendars and astronomically aligned megalithic structures, Clube and Napier further speculate that the object responsible for this mischief was the progenitor of the comet Encke. Kenneth Brecher, an astrophysicist at Boston University, sees a link between comet Encke, the Tunguska event of June 30, 1908, and the June 25, 1178 impact on the Moon reported by the monk Gervase of Canterbury. This lunar impact is thought to have produced a crater (Giordano Bruno) 20 kilometers in diameter! To account for both these energetic events occurring on almost the same day of the year, Brecher postulates that a large piece of comet Encke broke away prior to 1178, producing a swarm of objects, some of which could be a kilometer across. He believes this swarm will be entering the Earth-Moon system again in the year 2042.

Cosmic debris has a size distribution somewhat like pebbles on a beach — the small outnumber the large. Currently the population of Earth-orbit-crossing asteroids a kilometer or larger in diameter is estimated to be around 2,000. If we go down in size to our 350-meter-across civilization cruncher, this number would at least double, and if all football-field-size city smashers such as the Tunguska object were included, the population would jump into the tens-of-thousands range. Including comets, less than 100 Earth-orbit-crossing objects (EOCOs) have been discovered to date. The limitations of a telescope looking through an ocean of air favors the detection of the larger objects, so most of the EOCOs detected so far have a diameter of a kilometer or more.

Our vast ignorance with respect to the whereabouts of these objects means, in the words of active EOCO hunter-geologist Eugene Shoemaker, "until we have tracked all of them, something could sneak up on us." Tracking all EOCOs is going to take some time. Planetary scientist Eleanor Helin and colleagues have found 20 of the known EOCOs; this represents 13 years of seeking. Even if improved equipment allows a discovery rate of 20 EOCOs per year we are speaking of perhaps 100 years just to locate the objects a kilometer or more across. The point is this: *because there is at present absolutely no way to predict when the next major impact will occur, we*

are fools if we do not effect a defense against these objects as soon as possible.

Eugene F. Mallove, in his outstanding article "The Bombarded Earth" (*Technology Review,* July 1985), makes the point that "a major difference between the threat from asteroids and that from nuclear warfare is that asteroid impacts will *inevitably* occur unless action is taken to prevent them. The trajectories of heavenly bodies leave no room for obscure calculations regarding the balance of nuclear terror." Unless we as a species truly have a death wish, the very presence of these Earth-orbit-crossing objects combined with our growing understanding of their destructive potential and the effect they have had upon our own history should be enough to bring forth a significant change within Gaia — at minimum a transformation of the nationalistic SDI to a globally cooperative Earth Defense Initiative (EDI), a transition which would redirect, without negative economic effects, the efforts and talents of many, if not most, who are currently involved in space weapons research and development.

We must put the ghost of past world wars to rest; should such warfare recrudesce, civilization in the northern hemisphere will surely cease. The strongest force pushing us toward such an unwanted recurrence is the fear of a breakthrough in weapon system technology. It is this fear combined with economic profitability that allows and encourages continued weapon system research and development. Historically such research and development has progressively reduced the time for human consideration during a time of crisis. This current project, SDI, threatens to reduce time for thought even more. A major purpose of EDI is to redirect this weapon research and development in an economically beneficial manner, toward a necessary and positive goal — protection of our environment. There is currently no technology available for tracking, following, and deflecting an incoming meteor or comet. The pieces of the technology are there, but they need to be put together with this purpose in mind. Attainment of this goal demands long-term active cooperation between East and West. Such cooperation is essential due to the fact that space-based nuclear explosives are the only tools that would in all cases be capable of altering the orbit of a large asteroid or comet. Hopefully, after the decades of intense, highly visible, active cooperation necessary to accomplish this project, fear of a weapon system breakthrough will have vanished.

Space is no place for weapons! Our access to it is rather an opportunity to eliminate a root cause of warfare — contention over the control of nonrenewable resources. The doomsday machines in place on this planet serve only one purpose — they maintain the status quo. By cooperatively developing an Earth defense system, the superpowers will have done far more than ensure a collision-free future; they will have constructed an infrastructure that allows the transformation of these cosmic threats into vast supplies of currently limited materials — raw materials which will no longer have to be gouged from Earth or refined at the expense of environmental quality.

The decision to protect our environment from significant random impacts as soon as we possibly can should not be argued against on the basis of static probability statistics. These numbers vary widely between authorities and have changed dramatically over the past few years; they give us only a crude estimate of the average frequency of such events. The odds against a damaging collision between Earth and an Earth-orbit-crossing object tell us nothing as to when we should expect the next event to occur. Our decision to develop an Earth defense system must be based upon the predictable consequences of an abrupt encounter of the worst kind.

This threat could very well be our most powerful defense against prevailing maniacal forces within the military-industrial juggernaut. By the simple act of petitioning (with persistence) our government to protect us from cosmic calamity, we may, in true aikido fashion, throw off the balance of this myopic military-industrial Goliath just enough to send it upon a new, constructive path — a path that leads away from this dark cloud which looms so heavily in the minds of us all. ■

The Leonid meteor shower of 1833.

THE WORLD'S WORST

I'VE RESEARCHED the Holocaust, war, terrorism, and related topics for many years, seeking to find patterns, explanations, causes. Why does anyone research so macabre a subject? To remember.

I have not differentiated between war and massacre. I am aware of only two major wars in which more soldiers were killed than civilians: World War I and our own Civil War. This list is not complete, for it has not attempted to include events before the year 1100 or cases for which numbers are unavailable — the Muslim conquest of India, some of the rebellions in China, and the long wars between the Turks and the Persians, for example.

Nor have I included "smaller" events. Examples of these include the Indonesian conquest of East Timor (100,000 victims); the mutual genocide of Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda/Burundi (150,000?); the Iroquois genocide against the Erie and Huron (5,000?); or the Red Sea slave trade in which Arab slavers traded in black eunuchs for Islam's harems (250,000?).

I may well be accused of a bias against Communism. That is not the case, but the facts are harsh: the toll of the purges, terrors, labor camps and engineered famines at the hand of the Soviet, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese regimes has been immense, not far short of the Mongol horrors.

It is a concern of mine that the numbers not be used to diminish the Holocaust. The industrialized genocide inflicted on the Jewish people by the Germans exceeds the others in horror, even if the toll of victims is less.

The list is being added to in Afghanistan, in West Iran, and as I write looks to be breaking out in Sri Lanka.

The literature of human hate and killing is immense. It is not localized in time or place. I have found no people, or religion or ideology which has not been both murderer and victim.

*** denotes a provisional or controversial estimate.**

Death Toll	Victims	Dates	Killers	Comments
59,000,000	people	1937-45	Racism, ideology	World War II.[a]
40,000,000	Chinese*	1210-40	Mongols	Conquest of North China.[b]
40,000,000	Chinese*	1850-64	Chinese	Taiping Rebellion.
30,000,000	Russians*	1930-53	Stalinist regime	Purge, slave labor.[c]
15,000,000	Chinese*	1949-64	Maoist regime	Purge, labor camps.
15,000,000	Russians	1941-45	Nazi Germany	(Civilians) conquest, maltreatment.[d]
15,000,000	people	1914-18	State rivalry	World War I.[e]
12,000,000	Africans*	1400-1880	Capitalism	Atlantic slave trade.[f]
10,000,000	Chinese	1937-45	Fascist Japan	Invasion, maltreatment.[g]
10,000,000	people*	1220-60	Mongols	Conquest of Russia, Middle East.[h]
6,000,000	Jews	1939-45	Nazi Germany	Death camps, slave labor.
6,000,000	Europeans*	1618-48	Religious war	Thirty Years' War.[i]
5,000,000	Americans*	1492-1600	Spanish	Conquest.[j]
5,000,000	Chinese*	1640-44	Chinese, Manchus	Manchu conquest.
5,000,000	Chinese	1250-80	Mongols	Conquest of South China
5,000,000	Chinese	1945-49	Chinese	Civil war (Chiang, Mao).
5,000,000	Asians*	1370-1405	Timurlane	Wars of Timurlane.[k]
3,500,000	Poles	1939-45	Nazi Germany	Conquest, slave labor.[l]
3,500,000	people	1789-1815	Rising nationalism	Revolution, Napoleon's wars.[m]
3,000,000	Russian POWs	1941-45	Nazi Germany	Maltreatment, slave labor.
3,000,000	people*	1096-1400	Religious war	The Crusades.[n]
3,000,000	Indochinese	1945-87	Revolution, ideology	The Vietnam wars.[o]
2,500,000	Koreans	1950-53	Ideology	The Korean War.[p]
2,500,000	Russian prisoners	1945-50	Stalin's regime	Execution, labor camps.[q]
2,500,000	Russians	1917-23	Ideology	Civil war.
2,000,000	European women*	1350-1750	Religious paranoia	Persecution of "witches."[r]
2,000,000	Hindu women*	?-1850	Religious custom	Practice of "suttee."[s]
2,000,000	Africans*	1839-1911	Europeans	Conquest of Africa.[t]
2,000,000	Indians*	1750-1850	British	Conquest of India.
2,000,000	Germans	1944-46	Russians, Poles	Forced migration.[u]

Greg Brecht and I have had a friendship-by-mail for fourteen years. He writes the best letters I ever hope to receive, long and personal and spiced with biting comment and fascinating historical digression. At last, after two years of friendly pressure, he's made me a map of humanity's crimes against itself. Read it and weep.

Greg describes himself, this time around, as a "German-American hillbilly with a bent for history and a ten-year-old thesis on the environmental administration of Antarctic resources." He's also a cartoonist, and he lives in Green Bay. —Sallie Tisdale

NOTES:

a. This total includes soldiers, civilians and genocides, some detailed above in table.
b. The Mongols sought to turn North China into pasture for horses.
c. This includes a deliberately engineered famine to break the will of the Ukrainian people.
d. This does not include Soviet Jews, military deaths or related mass murder at Stalin's hands. The total nears 30 million.
e. Ten million of these were soldiers killed in battle. Incompetent generalship in effect killed a million men.
f. The nations most involved: Americans, British, Danes, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish. There was some German, Arab, Swedish and other involvement.
g. The best-known incident was the "Rape of Nanking," where 200,000 Chinese civilians were massacred. The Japanese Army routinely used mass killing as a terror technique to quell resistance, as did the Germans.

MASSACRES

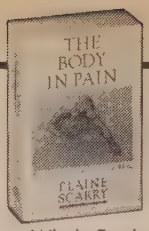
BY GREG BRECHT

Death Toll	Victims	Dates	Killers	Comments
2,000,000	Indians	1500-1850	Thuggee cult	Ritual caste murder.[v]
2,000,000	Europeans*	1300-1750	Religious paranoia	The Inquisition.[w]
2,000,000	Mexicans*	1400-1520	Religious custom	Human sacrifice.
1,500,000	Cambodians*	1975-78	Red Terror	Khmer Rouge regime.
1,500,000	Mexicans*	1910-23	Anarchy	Civil war.
1,000,000	Armenians*	1916-18	Turks, Kurds	Genocide.
1,000,000	Bengalis	1969-71	Pakistanis, anarchy	Bangladesh independence.[x]
1,000,000	Asians*	1947-49	Hindus, Muslims	Partition of British India.[y]
1,000,000	Americans*	1810-24	Spanish, Americans	Independence wars from Spain.
1,000,000	Indians*	1853-54	British	Sepoy Rebellion.
1,000,000	Nigerians*	1966-69	Nigerians	The "Biafran War."[z]
1,000,000	Indonesians*	1942-45	Fascist Japan	Maltreatment of conscript labor.
1,000,000	Chinese*	1904-05	Russians, Japan	Russo-Japanese War.[aa]
1,000,000	Japanese	1943-45	Americans	Terror bombing.[bb]
1,000,000	Germans	1939-45	British, Americans	Terror bombing.[cc]
1,000,000	Greeks, Turks	1919-23	Turks, Greeks	Greco-Turkish War.[dd]
1,000,000	Europeans	1900-12	Europeans, Turks	Balkan Wars.
1,000,000	Serbs, Croats	1940-45	Croats, Serbs, Germans	Genocide, civil war.[ee]
600,000	Spanish	1936-39	Spanish	Spanish Civil War.[ff]
600,000	Americans	1861-65	Americans	U.S. Civil War.[gg]
500,000	Mexicans	1850-75	Mexicans, French	Anarchy, civil war, invasion.[hh]
500,000	Afghanis	1979-87	Russians	Soviet invasion.[ii]
500,000	Algerians	1957-63	French, Algerians	War of Independence, civil war.
500,000	Gypsies	1939-45	Nazi Germany	Death camps.
500,000	Vietnamese*	1954-65	Hanoi Red Terror	Purge, labor camps.
500,000	Kurds	1920-87	Turks, others	Kurd war for independence.
500,000	people	1947-87	Ideology, religion	Israeli-Arab wars.
500,000	Japanese POWs	1945-50	Chinese, Russians	Maltreatment in camps.
500,000	Sudanese	1960-87	Sudanese	Civil war.
500,000	Ethiopians	1960-87	Anarchy, ideology	Ogaden, Eritrean wars, Red Terror.

h. 700,000 people were put to the sword at the sack of Merv, and very large numbers when the Mongols took Kiev, Herat, Nishapur, Samarkand, Balkh and Baghdad.
i. Germany and Bohemia lost a very high percentage of people.
j. The bloodiest episodes were the Spanish conquest of Hispaniola, the Aztec, Maya and Inca.
k. Timurlane (who was Turko/Mongol) sought to emulate Genghis Khan. He took grim pleasure in pyramids of skulls. He conquered Persia, much of India and Central Asia and, at his death in 1405, was preparing to invade China.
l. This does not include Polish Jews or the thousands of Poles the Russians killed.
m. There were savage guerilla wars in Spain and the Vendee, and the French invasion of Egypt begat much violence. The word "guerilla" originated at this time in Spain.
n. Crusades were fought in the Baltic (the Teutonic Knights) and against heretics. The Albigensian Crusade (1229) in the south of France killed a million people.
o. This includes death resulting from the Vietnamese occupation of Laos and Cambodia and the border war with China. During the American phase, about 1.4 million Vietnamese died, half of them soldiers.
p. Korean civilians suffered terribly, but Chinese military casualties were very heavy. The North Koreans were particularly prone to atrocity.
q. These are Russian soldiers and civilians captured by Germany, turned over to Stalin and murdered by him. Thousands had fought for the Germans, thousands more were prewar refugees. The blame lies partly on the British and Americans.
r. While some men were burned, the victims were overwhelmingly women, particularly older women, the retarded and the mentally ill.
s. Suttee is the ritual whereby a Hindu widow dies on her husband's funeral pyre.
t. The Germans were particularly brutal in Namibia and the Belgians in Zaire. At this time the Ethiopians themselves warred for conquest.
u. Some 16 million Germans and "Volkdeutsch" were moved. Germans had lived in some of the area for 700 years.
v. Thuggee was a cult honoring the goddess Kali. The word "Thug" originated here.
w. The Inquisition in Spain murdered many people who had converted or were descended from Jewish or Arab converts. They were suspected of secret apostasy.
x. India fought Pakistan, aiding Bengali freedom. Ethnic violence was extreme.
y. British India included what is now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
z. Large-scale ethnic massacres of Ibos began the war.
aa. They fought over the right to Manchuria.
bb. Including the firebombing of Tokyo as well as the atomic bombings.
cc. The firebombings of Hamburg and Dresden produced huge casualties. Estimates of the toll at Dresden go as high as 400,000.
dd. Greece tried to conquer parts of Turkey. Greeks were expelled, having lived there for 2,000 years.
ee. The Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs engaged in a bitter civil war with extreme atrocities committed by each against the other. The fascist Ustachi murdered at least 500,000 Serbs. The Germans, Bulgarians and Hungarians killed more.
ff. Among the victims were 20,000 Catholic priests and nuns.
gg. This was a clean war, but 15,000 Union POWs died of maltreatment at the Confederate prison camp at Andersonville.
hh. The French invaded Mexico, seeking to place Maximilan (brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef) on the throne.
ii. Both sides conduct atrocity daily. Russians captured are usually murdered. The Russians and their puppet troops use terror as a tactic.
jj. There are several different wars concurrent in Ethiopia. The Mengistu regime killed about 30,000 people in a purge, and may or may not be engineering a famine to starve rebels; the evidence is inconclusive. ■

The Body in Pain

Torture and the experience of living in a war zone are horrible to contemplate — so horrible that it is actually difficult to imagine the experience. Both are too close and at the same time too unreal, too removed. Yet we are filled with fascination, drawn to the images and descriptions of institutionalized, organized pain. Elaine Scarry, an English professor, offers a "philosophical meditation" on pain. It is Scarry's desire to describe "the ways other persons become visible to us, or cease to be visible to us," and to that end she brings a daunting body of research together with precise analysis. She is concerned with language, not only in its function of description but in the way pain destroys the ability to describe and communicate. This is the most thought-provoking book I've read in years. It's not easy and it's not fast, but it is ripe with an understanding that goes to the fundamental concerns of history and culture. —*Sallie Tisdale*



The Body in Pain
Elaine Scarry
1985; 385 pp.
$8.95 postpaid from:
Oxford Paperbacks
16-00 Pollitt Drive
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
or Whole Earth Access

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Torture systematically prevents the prisoner from being the agent of anything and simultaneously pretends that he is the agent of some things. Despite the fact that in reality he has been deprived of all control over, and therefore all responsibility for, his world, his words, and his body, he is to understand his confession as it will be understood by others, as an act of self-betrayal. In forcing him to confess or, as often happens, to sign an unread confession, the torturers are producing a mime in which the one annihilated shifts to being the agent of his own annihilation. But this mime, though itself a lie, mimes something real and already present in the physical pain; it is a visible counterpart to an invisible but intensely felt aspect of pain. Regardless of the setting in which he suffers (home, hospital, or torture room), and regardless of the cause of his suffering (disease, burns, torture, or malfunctioning of the pain network itself), the person in great pain experiences his own body as the agent of his agony. The ceaseless, self-announcing signal of the body in pain, at once so empty and undifferentiated and so full of blaring adversity, contains not only the feeling "my body hurts," but the feeling "my body hurts me."

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The weapon and the tool seem at moments indistinguishable, for they may each reside in a single physical object (even the clenched fist of a human hand may be either a weapon or a tool), and may be quickly transformed back and forth, now into the one, now into the other. At the same time, however, a gulf of meaning, intention, connotation, and tone separates them. If one holds the two side by side in front of the mind — a hand (as weapon) and a hand (as tool), a knife (weapon) and a knife (tool), a hammer and a hammer, an ax and an ax — it is then clear that what differentiates them is not the object itself but the surface on which they fall. What we call a "weapon" when it acts on a sentient surface we call a "tool" when it acts on a nonsentient surface. The hand that pounds a human face is a weapon and the hand that pounds the dough for bread or the clay for a bowl is a tool.

A Perfect Spy

*Not a spy novel. Le Carre, of **Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy** fame, long ago found the depth missing in most spy and mystery writing. His books are windows into characters so real and so intimately drawn that the reader feels almost the voyeur in the reading. **A Perfect Spy** is the story of Magnus Pym, a British spy whose lifelong career of duplicity steadily, and inevitably, whirls out of his control. It is about illusion, and delusion, and how we come to grips with the burdens given us by our parents, and the burdens we create for ourselves. The author's handling of a complex tapestry of plots and subplots is effortless.*
—*Sallie Tisdale*

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I have seen him alone a hundred times as he stood that morning. Rick alone, brooding at the doorway of a crowded room. Rick his father's son, the glory of a great heritage creasing on his brow. Rick waiting, like Napoleon before the battle, for Destiny to sound the trumpets for his assault. He never made a lazy entrance in his life, he never fluffed his timing or his impact. Whatever you had in mind till then, you could forget it: the topic of the day had just walked in. So it is in the Tabernacle on this rainy sabbath, while God's wind booms in the pine rafters high above and the disconsolate huddle of humanity in the front pews waits awkwardly for Rick. But stars, we know, are like ideals and elusive. Heads begin to crane, chairs creak. Still no Rick. The Night School Boys, already in the dock, moisten their lips, tip nervously at their ties. Rickie's done a bunk. Rickie can't face the music. The deacon in his brown suit hobbles with an artisan's mysterious discomfort towards the vestry where Rick may have hidden. Then a thump. Round whips every head to the sound, till they stare straight back down the aisle at the great west door, which has been opened from outside by a mysterious hand. Silhouetted against the grey sea clouds of adversity, Rick T. Pym, until now David Livingstone's natural heir if ever we knew one, gravely bows to his judges and his Maker, closes the great door behind him, and all but vanishes once more against its blackness.

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"Where did he say he'd go, then?" Brotherhood snapped. "Back to Washington? Moscow?"

"Home. He said there was only ever one place. Home. I mean this shows you. The man loves his country, Mr. Brotherhood. Magnus is no renegade."

"Didn't know he had a home," said Brotherhood. "Vagrant childhood, he always told me."

"Home is a little seaside town in Wales. It has a very ugly Victorian church. It has a very strict landlady who shuts him in at 10 p.m. And one of these days Magnus is going to lock himself in that upstairs room and write his ass off till he comes out with all twelve volumes of Pym's answer to Proust."

Brotherhood might not have heard. He strode faster.

"Home is childhood re-created, Mr. Brotherhood. If defection is a self-renewal, it requires also a rebirth."

"That his stupid phrase or yours?"

"Mine and his equally. We discussed all this and we discussed much, much more. Know why so many defectors redefect? We had that one straight too. It's in and out of the womb all the time. Have you ever noticed that about defectors — the one common factor in all that crazy band? They're immature. Forgive me, they are *literally* mother-fuckers."

A Perfect Spy
John Le Carre
1986; 517 pp.
$4.95
($6.45 postpaid) from:
Bantam Books
414 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016
or Whole Earth Access

Access to War

The business of war games is something of a cottage industry these days. The national franchises are giving way to independently owned and operated fields, advertised by leaflets or private newsletters. One operator in the Los Angeles area said he stopped advertising almost as soon as he began; his mailing list grew to over 10,000 names in a matter of months.

One way to get started is to join the Paint Ball Game Association (PBGA), which includes players, field operators, and manufacturers of game supplies. Members receive an international directory of fields, play in tournaments, and receive a bimonthly newsletter as well as a wholesale rate on supplies. PBGA is a self-governed body, and members can run for positions as player representatives.

One newsletter for war-game enthusiasts is ***Front Line Magazine****. The publishers distribute the magazine to players and will mail it free to your home.* ***Front Line****, which emphasizes the Los Angeles area, is crammed with advertisements for fields, tournament games, and equipment suppliers. Be aware that* ***Front Line*** *receives mixed reviews from serious players, some of whom feel it emphasizes the militant aspects of war and survival games. The ads are fascinating.*

Dealers, distributors, and folks with equipment queries can call Pursuit Marketing at 800/752-9990; no game referrals. —*Sallie Tisdale*

Front Line Magazine
Mike Jasperson, Editor
$15/year (12 issues) from:
Front Line Magazine
P. O. Box 2710
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Paint Ball Game Association: membership $35/year. PBGA, 241 Marine Street, Santa Monica, CA 90405.

SAT CONG VILLAGE
...A Sense of Adventure
The Protected will never know....

Swish a towel from a clothesline? No! At Sat Cong Village you rescue P O W 's, assassinate V.C officer and take his ear, capture documents, blow ammo dump and knock out comm shack

Saigon Sams field store provides bulk paint, CO_2, goggles, and guns for number 1 G I

Beware of Imitations

For more information or reservations call (818) 333-5356

Access to Peace

With two male children approaching adolescence, war toys and play guns have become an almost routine source of concern and, ironically, argument in our family. Every parent I know struggles with this same question, whether with tired resignation, amused tolerance, or an endless, often fruitless vigilance. Lately my three-year-old girl has taken to laser noises and that wide-legged policeman's stance, as well. Sometimes I blame myself for allowing too much television, too many comic books; sometimes I wonder how different my son's childhood would have been if he'd been raised in a woodsy cabin somewhere. (But last year I heard from friends who have raised two boys in woodsy-cabin settings; they were upset that every stick and piece of broccoli was turning into a gun.) The roots of aggressive and violent behavior in children are murky and complex and not at all limited to media intrusion. But insofar as the toy and television producers have excited — and brought detail to — what may be inherent human traits, we as parents can retain a measure of control.

The International War Toys Boycott Campaign specifically targets the manufacture and purchase of war toys and play guns, including "hero" dolls and games that encourage conflict situations. They provide information on manufacturing and advertising campaigns, as well as information for families. The boycott was originally a project of the Canadian branch of the Alliance for Non-Violent Action.

The Children's Creative Response to Conflict program (CCRC) involves a number of workshops for parents, teachers, child-care workers; and children on conflict resolution and nonviolent group process. The American office publishes a newsletter, ***Sharing Space****, for $3 per year. People wishing information on local CCRC programs should include $2 U.S. for handling costs.*

In Canada, CCRC is part of the Alternatives: Living Peace and Justice group in Ontario. —*Sallie Tisdale*

International War Toys Boycott Campaign: Centre for Non-Violence/Deb Ellis and Ken Hancock, 9 Melbourne Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1K1, Canada.

Alternatives: Living Peace and Justice: Mary-Anne Buchowski-Monnin and Denis Monnin, P. O. Box 7068, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3Z6, Canada; 613/224-2364.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program (CCRC): c/o Alternatives, as above, for Canadians, or: CCRC, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.

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G.I. Joe toys by Hasbro of Pawtucket, Rhode Island are made in Hong Kong. 34 different good American soldiers and evil Crimson Guard fight in global warfare. One good soldier and one evil soldier are females, the rest are males. The bad guys wear red uniforms. Some sample soldiers include: *Lady Jaye*, a U.S. covert operations spy who "can easily pass for a Russian, German, Afghan . . . can squat down with a basket of oranges in any Middle Eastern market." *Bazooka* is a U.S. tank driver who became an armor rocket launcher specialist, "expert in the Dragon Anti-Tank Missiles and all Warsaw Pact RPG systems." *Cobra Elite Trooper* of the Crimson Guard (i.e. Red Army) is into espionage and has "an initiation ceremony too hideous for description . . . that friendly neighbor of yours might just have a red uniform in his closet."
—War Toys Boycott Campaign literature

WAR GAMES

BY RICK FIELDS
ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES DONNELLY

I AM CROUCHED AT THE BASE of a pine in a wilderness area somewhere between Denver and Aspen, holding a pistol with the safety off, hardly daring to breathe, as I watch the woman I live with crawl through sagebrush and cactus, her pistol glinting in the noonday sun.

A twig cracks loudly in the trees to my right. I turn toward the sound, heart pounding, adrenalin roaring. There are other people in these woods, stalking me just as I am stalking them, and the ever-present possibility of ambush — made even more possible by the Army camouflage fatigues and green-and-black face paint we all wear — hones my attention needle sharp. The sky is a dazzling blue, the pines deep green, and the sounds of chirping birds and buzzing insects are crisp and clear.

The sudden crack of a pistol going off on the hill above us makes my friend rise just enough to see what's going on — and just enough to give me a clear shot. I have never shot anyone before, and it feels more than a little strange. But I take careful aim, and slowly and deliberately pull the trigger.

The sound is very loud and very real, and I can see immediately that I have scored a direct hit. She swings around in surprise, as if she has just been bitten by a very large mosquito, and a bright blood-red stain of paint spreads over her khaki shirt, just below her shoulder. "You're dead," I say, and she puts on a yellow nylon vest, and leaves the field. Twenty minutes later a whistle signals the end of the round, and we all gather back at the staging area. The air is full of war stories — of sneak attacks, tactical errors, defeats and victories, close escapes and near misses. I tell my friend about my moment of hesitation before firing, and wonder out loud if I should have pulled the trigger. "Well," she says, looking me straight in the eye, "if you hadn't gotten me first, I sure would have gotten you. Anyway," she laughs, "you should see yourself. You look terrible."

That, no doubt, is true. My face is splattered with red paint from a shot that got me while I thought I was hidden behind a tree (I was, my arm wasn't), and I am caked with dust, sweat, and pine needles. But I feel — for reasons I cannot quite fathom — more alive than I have in a long time.

IT WAS a puzzling, even disturbing feeling. I had come of age during the Vietnam era, and like many of my friends had gone to a good deal of trouble to stay out of the war, and then to fight against it. And yet, here I was, wearing camouflage shirt and pants, with green and black warpaint smeared over my face, and shooting a gun — for an airgun *is* a gun — at another person, and enjoying it. Of course, it was not real, but it made me look closer at some of my most cherished and basic assumptions about myself. Perhaps I was not as "peaceful" as I had thought. If I could lose myself so thoroughly in a game, then what might happen in reality? I couldn't really say, but it was enough to know that a part of me that had been barely acknowledged had come into the open, like a bullet fired from a gun.

The game that I had been playing goes by many names — the War Game, the Survival Game, the Adventure Game, the Ultimate Game, Pursuit, Skirmish, Strategy, and — most innocently — Paintball. It is played with air guns powered by carbon dioxide which shoot paint pellets that explode on impact. The paint washes off. The game itself is based on that old Boy Scout and summer camp standby, Capture the Flag. If you are hit anywhere with a paintball, you're dead, and must leave the field until the next round. (A single round takes about an hour; most people play all day, with a break for lunch.) Points are scored for every kill, so if nobody captures the flag and returns it to their own territory, the game can still be won on points.

Being hit by a paintball can sting a little, and sometimes more than a little. It hurts just enough, in any case, so that players naturally

If what we really want is a Better Game Than War, perhaps war games are what we should play. So suggests Rick Fields, whose last appearance in these pages was "The Perils of the Path" (CQ #40, p. 124), a succinct discussion of the tribulations of a spiritual journey. That article became part of Chop Wood, Carry Water *(J. P. Tarcher/St. Martins, 1985), which Fields co-authored. He also wrote* How the Swans Came to the Lake, *a history of American Buddhism, and currently is editor-in-chief of* The Vajradhatu Sun, *a bimonthly Buddhist newspaper.* —*ST*

do their best not to be hit. Sometimes there are bruises. Heavy plastic goggles must be worn at all times to protect the eyes. The Game, as I'll call it, is a realistic game, which is a large part of its appeal.

The Game was invented in 1981 by George Gaines, of "Pumping Iron" fame, and two of his friends, Hayes Noel, a stockbroker, and Bob Guernsey, a ski shop owner. Gaines and his friends franchised it as the National Survival Game, which now has a hundred or so fields in the United States, Canada, and Europe. An estimated 1 million people have probably played the Game at least once since its beginnings. Profits for successful fields can be as high as $1,000 a day.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, however. The Game has reached its most exotic and surrealistic form in the unfranchised fields of Southern California. There are at least fifty playing fields in the Los Angeles/San Diego area now.

Central headquarters for game field operators and aficionados in Los Angeles is McMurray & Son ("So. Calif.'s oldest Airgun Service Center"). McMurray & Son has been around since Tim McMurray's grandfather started it in 1933.

Tim specializes in the California art of customizing — in his case air guns, which most people use for target practice. Tim, a friendly bespectacled fellow in his middle thirties, told me that since October business had tripled, mainly because he now customizes paint pellet pistols and rifles and is one of the major distributors of the paint pellets used in the Game.

I'd asked Tim how many people he thought played the Game. He said it was hard to tell. He sold about 6,000 carbon dioxide cartridges a month. Depending on how aggressive a player is, he might use one or two cartridges every game. The calculations were interrupted by a customer who looked like — and, I later learned, was — an IBM engineer, wearing a red baseball cap. He wanted to make some further changes on his McMurray Assault Special, a combat games pistol made from a Sheridan PG model. "All our work is field tested," Tim told me. "We get our best ideas from players."

Tim went back to his calculations. He figured that about one and a half million paintballs are shot every weekend. "I'd say about 100,000 people a week are playing in Southern California now," said Tim. "And remember, Southern California is a target market for sports. It's big and getting bigger." Tim reached behind the counter and handed me a copy of *Front Line*. The phone rang for about the twentieth time since I'd been there, and I asked Tim if he played the Game much. "Nope," he said, as I left. "Never have."

Reading *Front Line* was like receiving a top-secret briefing on the Game. There were advertisements for fields stretching from Los Angeles to San Diego. Some fields emphasized the variety and beauty of their terrain — rolling hills, streams, heavy cover, a view of the Pacific. Others sounded more like Hollywood sets. Sad Sack's, for example, boasted of having two tanks, a Viet Cong village, and hidden mines and bunkers. Adventure Land offered video tapes of your game. A number of fields had ongoing tournaments. Articles covered basic strategy, safety, and equipment. Fogged goggles seemed a major concern. One player wrote in to suggest that using antiperspirant on the face before a game did wonders. Another profile of "The Unlucky Player" described a fellow who shot his own teammates, dropped his paint pellets, stole his own flag (and therefore had to be shot by his teammates), and finally locked his keys in his car.

Front Line is put together by

"Nothing gets the adrenalin going like the Game. It's an incredible feeling, it's the thrill of the hunt — pursuit."

Brad Jasperson and friends from Huntington Beach; it's supported by advertisers and sent free to Game players. Jasperson works, in the real world, as a service rep for IBM. I asked him, over the phone, why he thought more women didn't play. A number of fields, like bars and dance halls, offered women free or half-price games. He agreed that more men than women played, but emphasized that the Game was co-ed. "The majority of the women I see play are better shots than the men and more aggressive than the men," he said. "They are usually better players." He said, also, that he'd heard about at least one all-woman team.

Brad said that he could understand how some people might get the idea that the Game was a paramilitary sort of thing. "It does give that impression sometimes," he told me. "With the camouflage outfits and paint on your face, standing around with people looking as ugly as yourself. And then you're doing everything that you've been told not to do with a gun. You're shooting it at people to eliminate them. But it's not that you're shooting people, you're marking them. It's a good, fun, exciting sport, and I don't see anything wrong with it. There's less body contact and less risk than with football. It's like big kids playing hide and seek in the bushes. And it's OK for us to play like kids."

THE NEXT MORNING, Saturday, I drove along the Coast Highway towards Malibu, where there is a field called Quest. Quest includes a crumbling Mexican adobe village, a bamboo hut straight out of Vietnam, and a command post with piles of empty ammo boxes and a frayed canvas tent. Bamboo and palms provided cover, and a large field of razor grass rippled menacingly in the gentle breeze from the ocean just across the highway.

Players were carefully painting their faces in black, green and brown in the dirt parking lot. The whole scene had a strangely menacing, yet festive atmosphere to it, as if the infantry had gone on a picnic. Custom air guns with long barrels and special stocks and extra ammo clips were much in evidence. A few groups had set up grills for lunchtime snacks.

As a walk-on who was not a member of a team ("mercenary" in the jargon of the Game) I was assigned to the Blue side. We assembled on the sagging wooden porch of the old cantina in the Mexican town, our flag placed in the center of the dusty main street, on a short iron pole.

I opted for defense the first round. Hidden behind the crumbling wall of an adobe shack, I peered through a crack in the wall at the heavy undergrowth in front of me. As the whistle went off, I checked to make sure my pistol was ready and that my goggles were in place. "The aim of the game is to capture the other team's flag, kill as many of the enemy as possible, and stay alive yourself," one of the yellow-vested referees had briefed us. In the silence that followed the whistle, as my adrenalin rose and my mouth dried, I realized that it was only the last of these objectives — to stay alive — that really mattered.

But we were playing against a team that called itself the Wolf Pack. They wore a snarling wolf shoulder patch to identify themselves, and they all had Darth Vader face masks, special goggles with cheek and nose guards. Many of them had rifles, more accurate than the usual pistols, if not more powerful. The Wolf Pack played at Quest nearly every weekend, and they knew the field well. Like their totemic animal, they worked together in packs of four or five. If you saw one, others were sure to be nearby, probably surrounding you. So I was understandably on edge when one of my teammates from the real estate team hissed and pointed in the general direction of a bamboo grove off to the left. Someone was moving in there, their camos blending with the shifting shadows and leaves and branches, very close to the ground.

I had the distinct impression I was all alone. The rest of my squad seemed to have disappeared. I heard the piercing pop of an airgun going off from the far end of the town. I couldn't see a thing, but I was sure the Wolf Pack was closing in.

A helicopter from the Malibu Sheriff's Department located just next to the Quest field flew overhead. Downdraft from the swirling blades swayed the bamboo. Suddenly I heard something, someone, moving in the dense brush to the right. My goggles were foggy from the sweat I had not noticed. I turned, took aim, and held my fire. A squirrel looked me right in the eye, chirped in alarm, and darted for cover.

American kids grow up on war movies in which the hero stays alive and saves the day by shooting faster and better than all the bad guys on the other side. The message of this movie burns, I believe, in the secret hearts of men who happily have never had the opportunity to check it out against reality, and so live with the notion that if push came to shove, they too would triumph like John Wayne or John Rambo, against all odds.

Those of us who never went to war also live with the notion put forth by Hemingway and more recently William Broyles (in a cover story for *Esquire* on "Why Men Love War,") that while war is hell, it is also the most intense and exciting experience a man

can have. According to this view, war puts you right out there on the edge of life and death — and gives an experience civilians can never know.

I would not argue with Broyles, not about the intensification of the senses, or the camaraderie of the battlefield, or the heightening of life. Certainly I felt very alive out there in the Game, which suddenly did not seem much like a game, with adrenalin coursing through my veins and my goggles fogging up, and my fingers itchy on the trigger. But I also felt, for a long, long moment, what it really meant to be out there, alone, facing an enemy hidden in the undergrowth, an enemy that had one thought in mind — to kill you before you killed him. It was not an experience, heightened senses or not, that I would care to pursue. Whatever lingering regrets I might have had after reading the Broyles piece, whatever romanticism about war, whatever thoughts that maybe I should have gone into the jungle in that war, were shattered by the realism of the Game that morning on the playing field of Malibu. The round ended before I fired a shot.

The next round I was happy to head out on an offensive squad. Our mission was to circle behind the enemy and then rush the flag at a certain signal. At the sound of the whistle I took off at top speed through the bamboo. Fifty yards from the palms that marked the enemy perimeter we fell to our bellies and started snaking in.

Suddenly, it seemed, I was surrounded. The Wolf Pack was in front and behind. I hid behind a tree that was cover from one side, but not from both. I got off a few good shots, and then I got killed.

The Quest field has a raised platform for viewing the manoeuvres. Those of us who had died in action stood there, watching the rest of the battle unfold, like watching a movie. There was a Blue defender, cautiously peering around a corner, while two attackers came up behind. He never knew what hit him.

While the battle raged below us, I talked with my fallen comrades, most of whom worked together in a real estate office. Deena, the

one woman on the team, had a pony-tail tucked under her floppy jungle camo hat. I asked her why she thought more women didn't play the Game. "Because it hurts so much," she laughed. "But what really hurts is your legs after running around all day." Deena said that she had played Cowboys and Indians as a kid, as well as the variation in which kids threw clods of dirt — dirt bombs, they called them — at each other. "This is like that, but more than you could ever imagine as a kid," she said. "I play for the excitement."

Craig, who was standing next to Deena, said, "It's like you're a kid again. It gives me a feeling of going back twenty years. A lot of people forget how to play as they get older. Maybe that's why I feel peaceful after I play. It's like something you lost gets put back."

"When you're playing you get to show a different kind of aggressiveness than in everyday life," said Brian. "You get to go bonzo and dive and jump and nobody thinks you're crazy."

"It allows you to build your own confidence," said Deena. "Like when your partner is taken out. You have to depend on yourself to do your best."

"But it's always scary," said Brian, "which is part of what makes it so much fun. Defending the flag is scary. Maybe there's two of you surrounded. You hear, 'I'm hit, I'm hit.' That's a real terrifying feeling."

The whistle blew, and the round was over. The Wolf Pack had won again. I asked Brian if his enthusiasm for the Game ever made him think that he might like to try the real thing. "I wouldn't want to," he said without hesitation. "It makes you think how easy it would be to get killed. Bushes stop paint, but not an M-16."

The next day, sobered but intrigued, I played against a team called the Bushmasters on a field called Skirmish.

In the last game, as the sun was disappearing behind the Santa Monicas, we decided to throw out all strategy and go for a kamikaze frontal assault. At the sound of the whistle, we took off through the woods until we ran into the Bushmasters' defense. I ended up playing cat-and-mouse with a Bushmaster who was perfectly hidden behind a fallen log. Our First Lieutenant signalled that he was going to circle around, up the hill, and come in behind.

It seemed to take my partner forever to make the climb, but when he was finally in position,

he shot and missed. But so did the Bushmaster. Now was my chance. I leaped and charged straight on. Then I was directly above him, yelling a wild war cry of delight. He looked at me as if I were mad, aimed, and pulled the trigger.

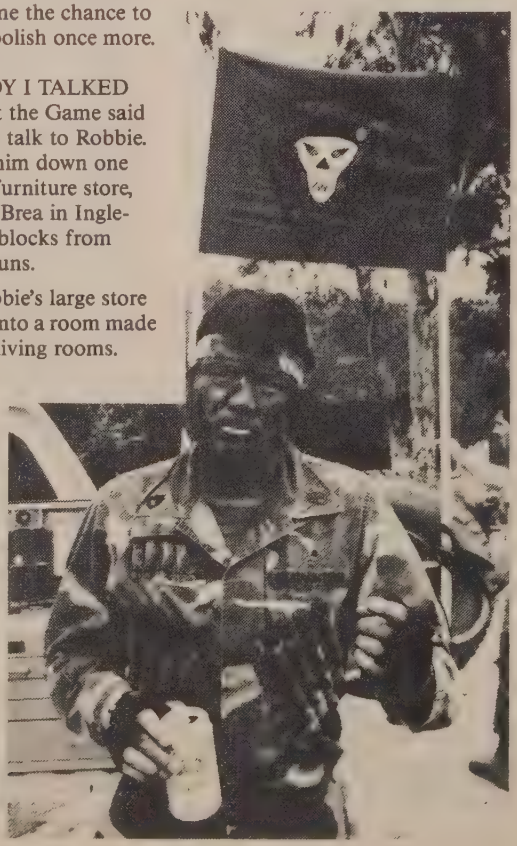
Miraculously, he missed — and just as miraculously, I missed too. I took off towards the stream, running with all the grace of a jackrabbit. Back at the staging area, as we discussed the day's battles, my wild charge was the object of much headshaking merriment. "You *should've* gotten killed," was the consensus.

And no doubt that was so. But it was also a manoeuvre I remembered long ago from the twilight games of Cowboys and Indians, a manoeuvre I had always loved — the feeling of throwing yourself with abandon and against all odds into the air and the battle, heedless, with no turning back. You were in the hands of the gods, then, and I for one was thankful that the Game and my fellow players, my comrades in arms, had given me the chance to be reckless and foolish once more.

EVERYBODY I TALKED to about the Game said I should talk to Robbie. I finally tracked him down one afternoon at his furniture store, "Jessie's," on La Brea in Inglewood, just a few blocks from McMurray's Airguns.

Walking into Robbie's large store was like walking into a room made up of a hundred living rooms. Robbie was a curly-haired man, compactly built, wearing an open shirt with a gold chain or two around his neck. "Have a seat," said Robbie, pointing to any one of a hundred living room sets. Robbie grimaced a little as he settled into the armchair. "I got a Purple Heart last week," he said. "I stepped in a hole and pulled my back out. But I finished the game." Robbie Goldberg is legendary in the war game world of Southern California. He admitted to being a real T-type, a thrill seeker who has won national championships in motorcycle racing, and tried everything from skydiving to catching rattlesnakes with his bare hands. But when he first heard about the war game, he knew this was it.

In the war game world Robbie is known as Major Robert Goldberg — he has a card to prove it — a recruiter and co-leader of the fearsome Headhunters. The Headhunters' biggest problem right now, said Robbie, was finding other teams willing to play them.



Rick Fields

This team's shoulder patch is a grinning skull crossed by lightning, with the words "Search & Destroy."

"In my first game, I killed five with six shots," said Robbie. "I thought I was pretty terrific, but then in my second game I got shot right away." He decided he wanted to play a more aggressive game. "I'm like the Chuck Norris of war games," Robbie laughed. "The team I'm with now, the Headhunters, has three fire teams. We have a book of plays. Each man is responsible for a particular play of action. We have a top-secret strategy, so I can't talk about it too much."

Robbie enjoys introducing newcomers to the Game, but becoming a full member of the Headhunters is a bit like making the Green Berets. "We have a sort of initiation period," Robbie said. "We had one guy we threw off the team because every time he saw somebody, he would shoot. It messed up our strategy. You know, some guys say they can shoot, so they think they can play on the Headhunters. But I ask them, 'Can you hit a moving target? And can you hit a moving target that's shooting at you?'"

The Headhunters prefer to play at a field called Sat Cong Village, which is considered the leading edge in playing fields for some war game aficionados. A number of players I spoke with thought it carried war game realism a little too far. Sat Cong features thatched huts on raised stilts. There are underground tunnels, and trap doors. There is a swamp, and there are plans to have live pigs and chickens wandering around.

Instead of wearing red and blue armbands for identification, the players at Sat Cong Village wear either G.I. clothes or the black smock and bamboo hat of a Viet Cong peasant. The Viet Cong objective is a briefcase of documents held by a mannequin U.N. officer in a hut. The G.I. objective — and here is what many find tasteless, to say the least — is a magnetic ear on a Viet Cong mannequin. But then, one could argue that war is pretty tasteless, too. In any case, Sat Cong Village is a field that attracts the players Robbie calls the Pros, and nobody seems to take the props any more seriously than if they were props in a movie.

"You take it as a game," said Robbie. "But you can drift back and forth over that border of reality. Sometimes it's so intense. You can smell the bugs. You can sense everything. It's still the oldest game known to man. Bang, you're dead, hide and seek, Cowboys and Indians. People think we're nuts, but they forget it's a game. Kill means score, like a touchdown in football. There are great moments, like taking out two players at once with perfect . . . placement. That's like having the one wave the surfer waits for. The Game is more exciting to me than skiing a seven-mile run at Big Bear.

"Every time I play, I can feel the fear building up," Robbie continued. "The fear is the stimulation of the game. But it's just a release. A release from working all week long in the retail business," he laughed, gesturing at the one hundred living room sets surrounding us. "I can get even with the customers who get mad at me. It's a great release. When the Game's over, the Game's over. You go home and put on your three-piece suit.

"It's not a mercenary thing," he continued. "We have no training in survival, in hand-to-hand combat or weapons. There's no politics or religion involved. It's just a bunch of guys having a good time in good clean fun.

"I used to be much more of a hawk before playing the Game. But once you've played the Game you know how easy it is to get killed. You know what your limitations are, you know how vulnerable you are, you know you're not invincible. Thank God," Robbie said with conviction, "I was not in Nam."

As I left, Robbie took aim and cocked his finger at me playfully. "Shoot ya later," he said.

A FEW YEARS AGO, at a symposium on the apocalypse, the neo-Jungian psychologist James Hillman said it was now crucial for us to "deconstruct war" by moving "the martial away from direct violence toward indirect ritual. Unless we enter into the martial state of soul," said Hillman, "we cannot comprehend its pull . . .. It was an ancient custom and still is a modern psychological technique to turn for aid to the very same principle that causes us affliction. The cure of the Mars, the god of war we fear, is the god himself."

Imagine, for a moment, a world in which the indirect "ritual" of war games — with paint balls or laser beam guns or flour pellets or bamboo swords, for that matter — were employed in place of the unspeakable weapons we pay our best scientists to produce. Such games, if they were developed by men and women dedicated to the search for a warless world, might serve us as a kind of laboratory or testing ground for our aggressive impulses — individual or collective, innate or learned — and finally help us unravel the deadly riddle of war. I don't think this is as unlikely as it may seem. I have already come across players of the game, martial artists influenced by the samurai code of bushido, who have devised a game in which blue paint pellets are designated "tranquilizers," which merely paralyze players for fifteen minutes, while deadly red paint pellets, which "kill," are allowed, but result in penalties for the players who use them. The possibilities are as endless as the human mind.

Nearly seventy-five years ago, on the eve of the carnage of the First World War, the great American psychologist and philosopher William James proposed, in a now-famous essay on "The Moral Equivalents of War," that the martial energies that went into war be channeled into constructive social directions — social service like the Peace Corps or Vista of more recent times. If our world lasts long enough, and if we take our spirit of play and imagination seriously enough, I'd like to think that the Game, in one form or another, may blossom into something the world could use — if not a moral then at least a playful alternative to war. ■

THE CARTOON GUIDE TO U.S. HISTORY THE FIFTIES

BRIGHT, WHITE LIGHT

by LARRY GONICK

IN THE THIN, COLLEGIAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE NEW MEXICO MOUNTAINS, OUR NATION'S BEST BRAINS PRODUCED THIS... THING...

IT BURST ON HIROSHIMA ON AUGUST 6, 1945... ON NAGASAKI AUGUST 9...

SO — YEARS BEFORE ANYONE NOTICED ACID RAIN, OZONE DEPLETION, OR THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT, PEOPLE SENSED A WHIFF OF A BREATH OF AN INKLING THAT SOMETHING WAS DREADFULLY WRONG...

THIS LED TO THE FAMILIAR JITTERY FEELING OF THE POST-WAR WORLD...

AND WHAT A WORLD... A GLOBE SHRUNKEN BY COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY... TWO COUNTRIES, THE U.S. & U.S.S.R, IMMENSELY SWOLLEN IN POWER... ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, THE TWO ERSTWHILE ALLIES BEGAN GROWLING LIKE TWO MALE DOGS IN A SMALL CLOSET.

THE U.S. DENIED THE U.S.S.R ANY ROLE IN JAPAN... RUSSIA KEPT THE WESTERN POWERS OUT OF EASTERN EUROPE... RUSSIAN TROOPS ENTERED IRAN... THE U.S. "RENTED" NAVY BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES... "RED" GUERRILLAS FOUGHT IN CHINA, KOREA, GREECE, YUGOSLAVIA... AND NO AGREEMENT ON GERMANY COULD BE REACHED.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE RUSSIANS REFUSED TO TAKE LOANS FROM U.S. BANKS — THE ULTIMATE TREACHERY!!

A- BOMB THEM SUCKERS!

IN '48, TRUMAN CALLED FOR "CONTAINMENT" OF COMMUNISM WHEREVER IT WAS.

OUR NEW DEFENSE PERIMETER

HENCE — REARMAMENT, THE N.A.T.O. ALLIANCE, A RING OF MILITARY BASES AROUND RUSSIA, AND FOREIGN AID — WITH STRINGS ATTACHED.

TRUMAN LAUNCHED THE MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR "MARSHALL PLAN" FOR EUROPE, DESIGNED TO (1) REVIVE EUROPE, (2) FOSTER DEMOCRACY, (3) STOP COMMUNISM, AND (4) CREATE A PLEASANT CLIMATE FOR AMERICAN BUSINESS EXPANSION (NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER).

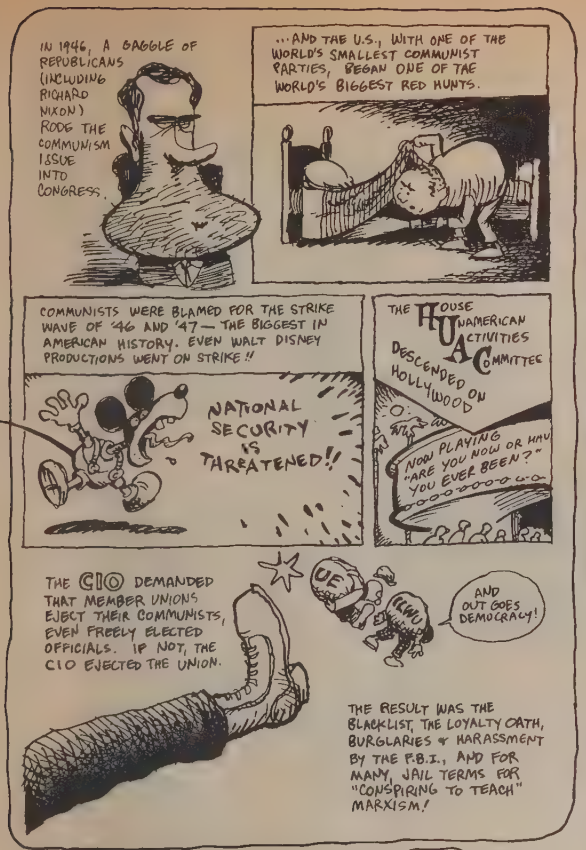
IT'S REALLY AMAZING HOW FAST IT HAPPENED... THE UNITED NATIONS, ORGANIZED IN A LOVE-FEAST MOOD IN MID-'45, DESCENDED INTO DIPLOMATIC EARBITING BY 1946.

THE HONORABLE DELEGATE FROM THE UNITED STATES IS A WAR-MONGERING MONOPOLY-CAPITALIST PIECE OF DOO-DOO — TRUE OR FALSE?

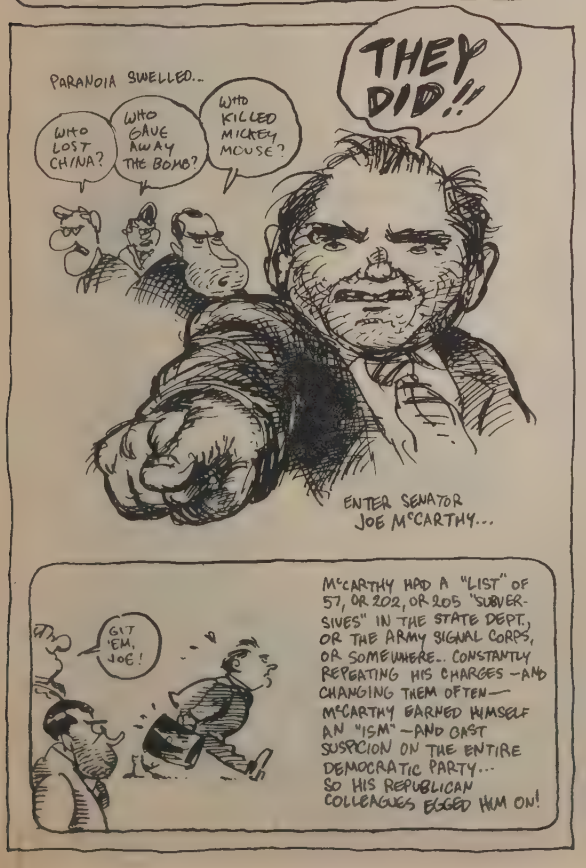
IT'S GOOD TO TALK.

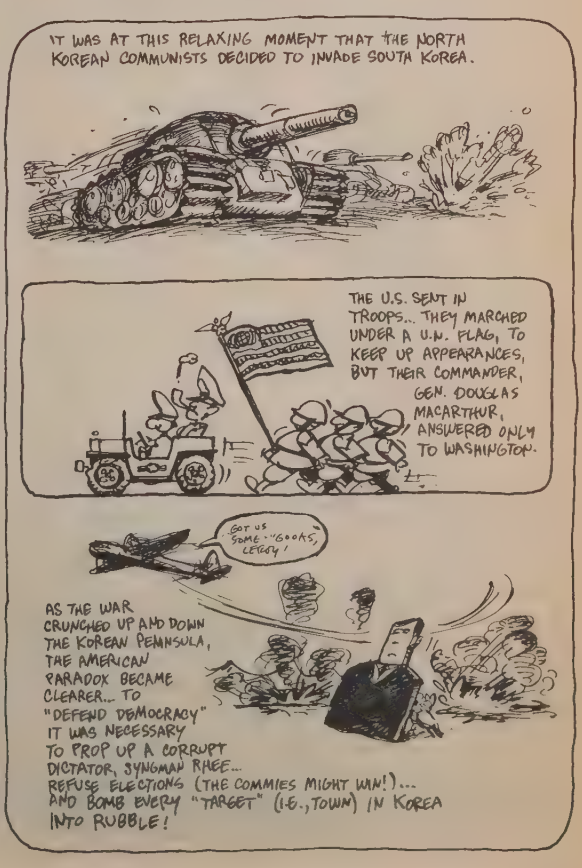
BY '48, THE WEST QUIT NEGOTIATING WITH MOSCOW AND CREATED A GOVERNMENT FOR WEST GERMANY. RUSSIA TRIED TO FREEZE THE WEST OUT OF BERLIN.. THE U.S. AIRLIFTED SUPPLIES UNTIL RUSSIA RELENTED... BUT—

TO THIS DAY, GERMANY IS DIVIDED, AND NO PEACE TREATY HAS BEEN SIGNED!


IN 1946, A GAGGLE OF REPUBLICANS (INCLUDING RICHARD NIXON) RODE THE COMMUNISM ISSUE INTO CONGRESS.
...AND THE U.S., WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S SMALLEST COMMUNIST PARTIES, BEGAN ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST RED HUNTS.
COMMUNISTS WERE BLAMED FOR THE STRIKE WAVE OF '46 AND '47 — THE BIGGEST IN AMERICAN HISTORY. EVEN WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS WENT ON STRIKE!!
NATIONAL SECURITY IS THREATENED!!
THE HOUSE UNAMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE DESCENDED ON HOLLYWOOD
NOW PLAYING "ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?"
THE CIO DEMANDED THAT MEMBER UNIONS EJECT THEIR COMMUNISTS, EVEN FREELY ELECTED OFFICIALS. IF NOT, THE CIO EJECTED THE UNION.
UE
AND OUT GOES DEMOCRACY!
THE RESULT WAS THE BLACKLIST, THE LOYALTY OATH, BURGLARIES & HARASSMENT BY THE F.B.I., AND FOR MANY, JAIL TERMS FOR "CONSPIRING TO TEACH" MARXISM!

1953 WAS THE "YEAR OF SHOCKS."
SHOCK #1: THE U.S.S.R. EXPLODED AN ATOMIC BOMB.
SHOCK #2: THE CHINESE REVOLUTION BRINGS THE COMMUNISTS TO POWER.
REMIND ME TO STOP READING THE PAPER...


PARANOIA SWELLED...
WHO LOST CHINA?
WHO GAVE AWAY THE BOMB?
WHO KILLED MICKEY MOUSE?
THEY DID!!
ENTER SENATOR JOE McCARTHY...
GIT 'EM, JOE!
McCARTHY HAD A "LIST" OF 57, OR 202, OR 205 "SUBVERSIVES" IN THE STATE DEPT, OR THE ARMY SIGNAL CORPS, OR SOMEWHERE.. CONSTANTLY REPEATING HIS CHARGES — AND CHANGING THEM OFTEN — McCARTHY EARNED HIMSELF AN "ISM" — AND CAST SUSPICION ON THE ENTIRE DEMOCRATIC PARTY... SO HIS REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES EGGED HIM ON!


IT WAS AT THIS RELAXING MOMENT THAT THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS DECIDED TO INVADE SOUTH KOREA.
THE U.S. SENT IN TROOPS... THEY MARCHED UNDER A U.N. FLAG, TO KEEP UP APPEARANCES, BUT THEIR COMMANDER, GEN. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, ANSWERED ONLY TO WASHINGTON.
GOT US SOME "GOOKS," LEGGY!
AS THE WAR CRUNCHED UP AND DOWN THE KOREAN PENINSULA, THE AMERICAN PARADOX BECAME CLEARER... TO "DEFEND DEMOCRACY" IT WAS NECESSARY TO PROP UP A CORRUPT DICTATOR, SYNGMAN RHEE... REFUSE ELECTIONS (THE COMMIES MIGHT WIN!)... AND BOMB EVERY "TARGET" (I.E., TOWN) IN KOREA INTO RUBBLE!

WITH WORLD WAR III LOOMING, TENSION ROSE... McCARTHY BLAMED THE KOREAN WAR ON THE EARLIER "SOFTNESS OF THE "COMMIECRAT" PARTY.--

I AIN'T SAYIN' THEY'RE ALL SPIES, NECESSARILY

HEY, WE CAN SHOW AS MUCH CONTEMPT FOR THE CONSTITUTION AS ANYONE!

YES, BE FAIR!

SO THE DEMOCRATS VIED WITH McCARTHY TO ESTABLISH THEIR ANTI-COMMUNIST CREDENTIALS.

WHEN THE REPUBLICANS INTRODUCED AN "INTERNAL SECURITY ACT", LIBERAL DEMOCRATS ADDED AN AMENDMENT CREATING CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS... ULTRALIBERAL HUBERT HUMPHREY DRAFTED A LAW DECLARING THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO BE NO PARTY AT ALL, BUT A CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY!!

TOUGH ENOUGH?

NEVERTHELESS, '52 BROUGHT A REPUBLICAN INTO THE WHITE HOUSE, WAR HERO DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

"IKE'S" VEEP WAS NIXON, SMARTEST OF THE McCARTHYITE GROUP.

SECRETARY OF STATE WAS THE PIOUSLY ANTI-COMMUNIST JOHN FOSTER DULLES.

IN '53 THEY ENDED THE KOREAN WAR.

IN '54 McCARTHY WAS SILENCED...

...AND, OVERTLY AT LEAST, PEACE FELL...

DRINK?

WHILE, COVERTLY, DULLES' LITTLE BROTHER ALLEN WAS LEADING THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INTO SOME NEW ARENAS: ASSASSINATION, PSY-WAR, L.S.D. EXPERIMENTS.

OUR STRATEGIC SUPPLY OF BANANAS IS IMPERILED!

THE C.I.A. BECAME AN ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY ARM, SECRETLY AIDING THE OVERTHROW OF LEFTIST—THOUGH ELECTED—GOVERNMENTS IN IRAN AND GUATEMALA.

AND SO... UNTROUBLED BY DANGEROUS THOUGHTS, AMERICANS SET ABOUT ENJOYING THEIR NEW SUPERPOWER STATUS... GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT CLIMBED YEAR AFTER YEAR... TRACT HOUSING SPROUTED LIKE CRABGRASS IN THE SUBURBS.. THE TAILFIN WAS INVENTED IN '55... AT LAST, THE AMERICAN DREAM WAS COMING TRUE!!!

DOW BE CROWDED...

SO WHAT IF THE TRACT HOUSE HAD A BACK-YARD BOMB SHELTER FULL OF SALTINES?

OR IF SCHOOL KIDS WERE DUCKING UNDER THEIR DESKS IN AIR-RAID DRILLS THAT NO ONE BELIEVED WOULD PROTECT THEM FROM THE BOMB?

HANDS OVER OUR NECKS, CLASS! IT'S IMPORTANT TO VAPORIZE OUR HANDS FIRST!

OR IF MOM WAS BECOMING AN ISOLATED BEING-IN-A-BOX?

M-I-C-K-E-Y..

OR IF PUBLIC HOUSING LOOKED LIKE THIS?

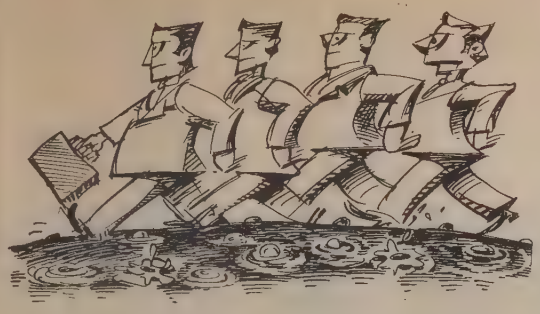
OR IF, WHEN 112 PEOPLE WERE ASKED TO SIGN A PETITION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 111 REFUSED?

OR IF BLACKS STILL RODE THE BACK OF THE BUS?

OR IF THE INDUSTRIAL BOOM DEPENDED ON CRANKING OUT PRODUCTS NOBODY NEEDED—OR EVEN IMAGINED BEFORE?

"FABRIC SOFTENER?"

BUT IF POLITICAL PROTEST WAS MUTED, STILL, UNDER THE MINDLESS MARCH OF CONFORMITY, SOMETHING WAS BUBBLING...



...AMONG SOUTHERN BLACKS, WHO HAD BEGUN TO CHALLENGE SEGREGATION WITH LAWSUITS AND BOYCOTTS...

CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER THURGOOD MARSHALL

...AMONG ALIENATED WHITE (AND BLACK) POETS AND DRIFTERS, WHO GATHERED IN COFFEEHOUSES WITH BONGOS AND BLACK TURTLENECKS...

JUST ABOUT THE ONLY SIGNS OF CULTURAL VITALITY WERE OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM... LIKE THE ANGRY PROSE OF JAMES BALDWIN...

THE ESOTERIC BEBOP OF PARKER, GILLESPIE, MONK...

THE POETRY OF ALLEN GINSBERG, PROSECUTED FOR OBSCENITY...

SATIRE LIKE KELLY'S "POGO"...

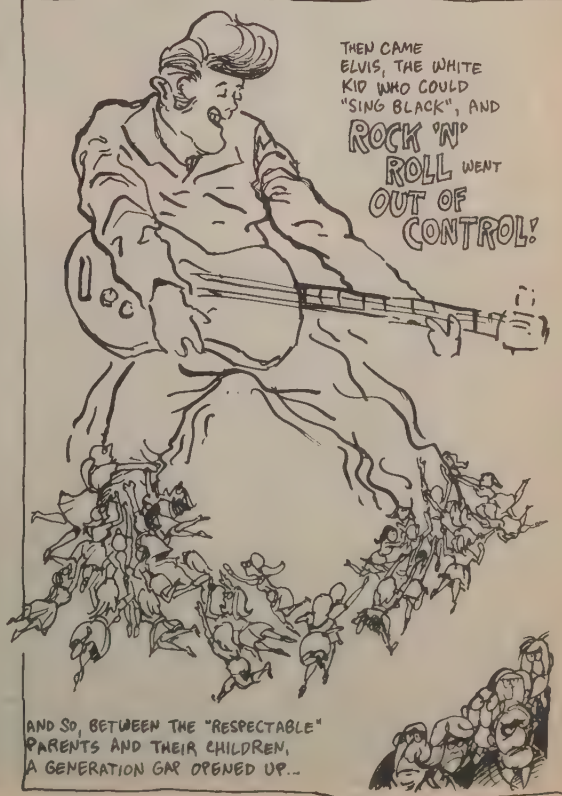
OR THE INSPIRED PARODIES OF KURTZMAN'S "MAD."

IT WAS ALSO THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF T.V... THIS WAS IN THE MAINSTREAM, BUT HOW EXCITED CAN YOU GET ABOUT MILTON BERLE IN DRAG?

AND... AND... WHAT WAS WITH THOSE TEENAGERS?

WHAT WERE THEY LISTENING TO? IT WAS AMAZINGLY LIKE THE 1920's ALL OVER AGAIN: GOVERNMENT MIND CONTROL WAS FAILING TO TAKE HOLD BELOW THE BELT!! ONCE AGAIN, BLACK DANCE MUSIC WAS CROSSING OVER: FATS DOMINO, CHUCK BERRY, LITTLE RICHARD... AND THE MESSAGE WAS... SEXY!

THEN CAME ELVIS, THE WHITE KID WHO COULD "SING BLACK", AND ROCK 'N' ROLL WENT OUT OF CONTROL!

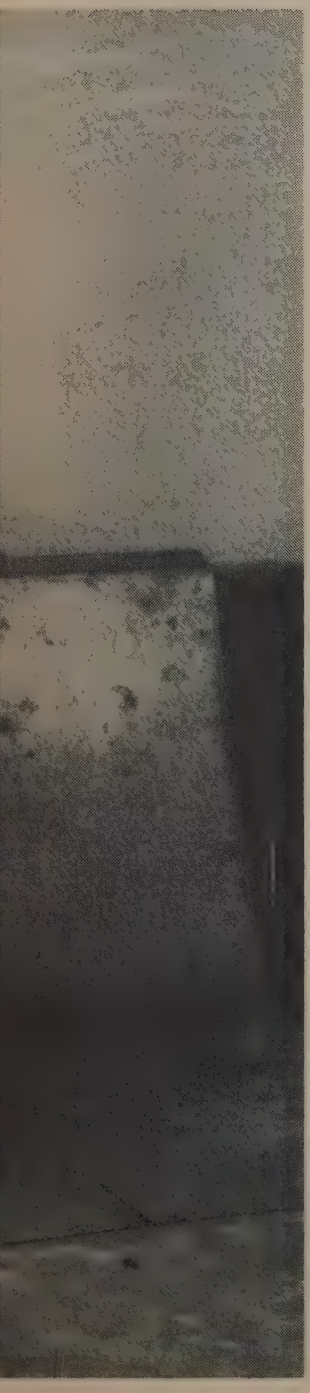


AND SO, BETWEEN THE "RESPECTABLE" PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN, A GENERATION GAP OPENED UP...

LOOKING FOR THE

SIMPLE LIFE

BY JOHN E. TOWNSEND, JR.



I GREW UP ON A FARM AND HATED IT. I LEFT AS soon as I could, when I went away to college, interrupted by an involuntary period in the Navy, followed by still more college, and I have only returned since for visits. For the past five years I have lived in New York City, which remains a source of wonder and amazement to my family. They decided some years before I actually left that I was, at heart, "just a city boy from the country." They meant that I probably belonged in New York anyway. In most other cases this is not something they would say to flatter a person. My eventual move so confirmed their earlier judgment that if, on my occasional visits, I happen to say anything at all about farming, agriculture, or the nature of agrarian life, someone is sure to tell about the time one of our cows, terrified at being loaded into a trailer and moved to new pasture, let fly her trauma-induced diarrhea all over me as I rode along on the side of the trailer. A great deal happened in the first half of my life, and most of it had little to do with diarrhea, but by moving to New York, it seems that this one incident has become the high point of my life on the farm, at least in my family's memory. It is as if I have relinquished, so far as they are concerned, all other claims to rural experience, and that the poor pop-eyed cow's horror at dislocation was fit commentary on my own attempts to find greener pastures. To give them their due, I have not been at all reluctant to give up my agrarian claims and would have done so long before if the chance had presented itself, the cow's opinion notwithstanding.

This makes my recent interest in moving back to the country and living on a farm — not the one I grew up on — seem very odd to me, and I have been at some pains to explain it. (I have not mentioned it to the family — yet.) I came close to understanding it — which is not the same as explaining it — on a recent trip to Pittsfield, Massachusetts. There I visited Hancock Shaker Village, Inc., "a not-for-profit educational organization supported by admissions, sales, contributions, and memberships." It is a lovingly maintained tourist attraction where no Shakers live.

The Shakers were a celibate, Protestant monastic sect that admitted both men and women, founded by Mother Ann Lee in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1774 Mother Ann and a small band of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing left Manchester, England, and settled outside Albany, New York. They believed in the bisexuality of the Deity and that Mother Ann was the female counterpart of Jesus. They practiced equality of the sexes in society, labor, and property, and eventually flourished in 18 com-

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A knotty problem, but one whose solution may ultimately prove as simple as its elusive manifestation: how do we keep our wisdom and say farewell to our mistakes? The two seem so entangled. John Townsend makes a start.

Townsend was born in North Carolina, but has become the city dweller par excellence. He works in library preservation in Albany, New York. "Albany is not the country," he writes, "but I can see it from here, just across the Hudson River." —*Sallie Tisdale*

Photo © 1985 by Linda Butler from *Inner Light: The Shaker Legacy* by June Sprigg, photographs by Linda Butler, reproduced by permission of Alfred A. Knopf.

munities with, at their peak, more than 6,000 members. Today there are less than a dozen. Working not only at agriculture but at a wide variety of crafts, the Shakers became prosperous, though never wealthy, in part through their shrewd and scrupulously honest marketing of goods to the outside world. Their belief that the Second Coming had already occurred in the person of Mother Ann and that they were, in all their labors, building the New Jerusalem on Earth led them to view all work as consecrated. As a result, Shaker products achieved a quality seldom matched before or since. These became highly prized and won the communities a degree of esteem that softened considerably the world's dismay at their weird religion.

What immediately appealed to me about the Shakers was the starkness and simplicity, the purity and purpose that seemed apparent everywhere in the village and was, I think, not entirely the product of historic gentrification. Even though the village remained an active (but steadily dwindling) Shaker community until the 1960s, once it was converted into a museum the site was stripped back as nearly as possible to its 1840s appearance, eliminating, or at least masking, many of the modernizations that had become a routine part of Shaker life. The appearance of the village therefore bears the taint of quaintness in spite of its quite unmistakeable beauty, and the overall impression — perhaps it is not intentional — is that the simplicity of the Shakers consisted of living in a deliberately "old-fashioned" way.

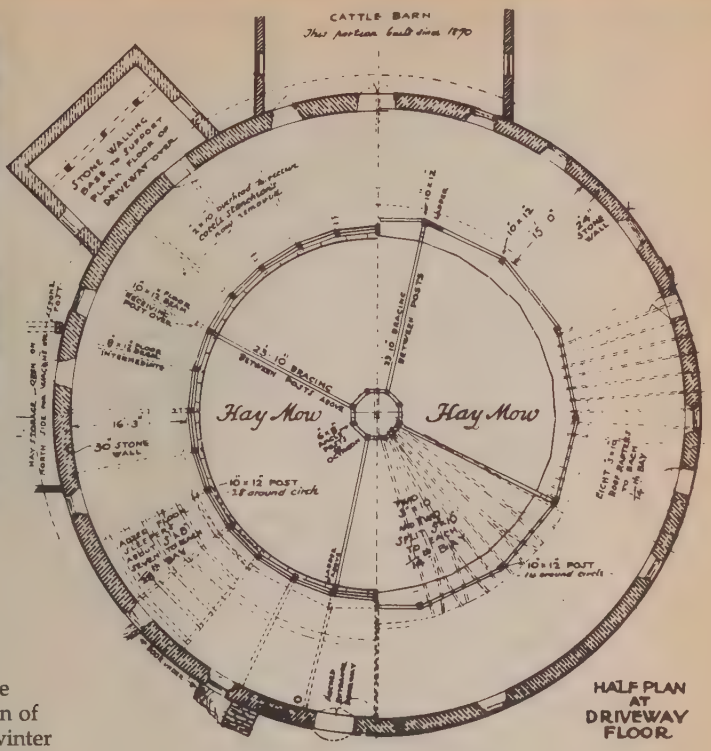
Simplicity of life has long been a personal goal, as much in the city as in my plans to flee it, but to be honest I do not come readily to an appreciation of the simple style. While growing up I equated simplicity with plainness, which is what I disliked most about life on the farm — it was as plain as grits. While visiting the historically gentrified Shaker village, however, I was surprised to find that the simple style made a deep and profound impression on me. It was not the first time this had happened, but I still could not explain it. Explaining, as I said earlier, is not at all the same as understanding, and not nearly so desirable, but I have always had a tendency to try to explain things even before I understood them. This time I was spared my explanations when I understood, quite suddenly, that it was not the style of the place, whether old-fashioned or simple or both, that so impressed and threatened to overwhelm me. It was, instead, its spirit, and spirit, as I eventually understood, has much more to do with the Simple Life than with a simple style.

It is not as easy to define the Simple Life as it is to recognize it, and it is not at all easy to recognize from our place in the twentieth century. What passes now for simplicity of life, especially the agrarian sort, is, if we look closer, more likely to reveal what Doris Lessing calls "a pathetic regression." In *The Sirian Experiments*,[1] a part of the Canopus in Argos archives, Lessing chronicles a time of great despair among the peoples of the Sirian Empire when "to 'live simply,' to 'get back' to nature,' seemed to nearly everyone the solution to all [their] new problems." As a result, whole planets in the Empire were given over to farming in the old style, aiming for full self-sufficiency, rejecting technical advances, and relying on old-fashioned techniques (except when times were too hard). The movement gradually passed, we are told, as it became obvious that "these artificial schemes, these expedients, did not succeed in stilling the inner drive towards transcendence, both social and personal." The farms remained, and so did the ideas, but, according to Lessing, they were understood by everyone to be no more than pathetic regressions.

Even though I am not interested in self-sufficiency, even though I am not trying to leave all technical advances behind, and even though I am not yet motivated to criminal action in the attempt to live simply, as were some in the Sirian Empire, there is something that seems inevitable in what Lessing says, at least so far as my own plans are concerned. In spite of all my attempts to avoid it, I fear that if and when I make it back to the country my life there will turn out to be no more than a pathetic regression. I saw exactly why this is so likely when I went into the round barn at the center of Hancock Shaker Village, especially as my companion and I walked around the manure storage level, between the stone wall of the outer foundation and the inner wall of the base of the hay mow.

Built in 1826, the barn is 270 feet in circumference and has 30-inch-thick stone walls 21 feet high. The hay mow inside is 35 feet high and 55 feet across, and can hold around 400 tons of hay. From above one man could pitch hay to all of the 52 cows that circled the mow on the first level, their heads pointed in toward the center, held between movable stanchions, ready for milking. The level above the cows was used as a threshing floor initially, and as a platform to unload the hay from wagons — 15 wagons could drive in with room to pass. The barn cost $10,000 to build and was immediately recognized as an architectural and agricultural marvel. In 1864 it burned, but was quickly rebuilt, with the addition of an underground level for the storage of manure, directly under the floor where the cows were kept. With the aid of trap doors gravity was allowed to complete the work it had started, carrying the manure from the cow to the floor, from the floor

The Round Barn can hold about 400 tons of hay and 52 cows. Hay on top, cows in the middle, manure below. Gravity and biology combined.



to the storage level below. Combined with the warmth of the beasts above and the insulation of the hay, the manure prevented the insidious winter frost from undermining the stone foundation, as happened in this century when the state of Massachusetts declared that wooden floors were no longer suitable for dairy barns, thus ending the functional life of the round barn.

"Uncle Eulie spent half his life shoveling shit," said my companion, "and here the Shakers had it figured out all the time — just let the shit fall and don't shovel it until you need it!"

This seemed to me a particularly accurate assessment of the functional innovation of the manure storage level. No doubt someone thought of it soon after the barn was built, but it was not until it burned 38 years later that they had an opportunity to put it in — until then somebody else's Uncle Eulie spent half his time shoveling shit. In trying to distinguish the Simple Life from the pathetic regression, however, the crucial point is this: their view of the sanctity of labor notwithstanding, at the first chance the Shakers changed the design of the barn in such a way as to save a tremendous amount of very dreary work.

Today it is often held that some work is better than other work, in and of itself, quite apart from any inherent virtue it may have, or useful product it may provide. White-collar work, for example, is usually considered better than blue-collar work because it is cleaner, more intellectual, and most of all because it generally pays more money. There are exceptions: when I started my white-collar job in New York it paid considerably less than the starting salary for a New York City garbage man, a position that does not require the fistful of academic degrees I will be paying off for some years to come. (Just for the record my current salary is about the same as that of the garbage man with the same number of years' experience, but I cannot get overtime.)

My mother tells me that my first ambition was to be a garbage man. We lived in the city (not a very big city) for a couple of years after I was born while my father finished college, and I was apparently very fond of watching the garbage men make their rounds. Later, when first asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said without hesitation, "garbage man." That I did not follow this early intuition is due to an infused middle-class belief in the superiority of mental work over physical work. The regularity with which I now question this infusion suggests that, as with the residents of the Sirian Empire, it is not altogether satisfactory.

Mother Ann directed her followers to put their "hands to work, hearts to God." Everyone has moments, extremely brief in most cases, when they glimpse what this means, when the work they do (mental or physical) takes on a meaning beyond the daily drudgery — momentary flashes of satisfaction in knowing that what we do is well done, or useful, or something like that. A sort of

transcendental harmony seems to settle about us and for a few moments we are contented. These flashes usually last just long enough to illuminate our despair, to show us the absurdity of riding the subway two hours a day and spending a few more hours in our place of employment, occupied in what the management considers productive work, all for the sake of a paycheck that goes mainly to subsidize the bloated greed of our landlords and pay the subway fares that always increase by a higher percentage than our wages. In such circumstances we may momentarily grasp the benefits of putting "hands to work," but we have lost the facility of putting "hearts to God" because our hands are for the most part so far away from our hearts.

This is why we fall into the pathetic regression. We turn "back to nature" because we hope to find there, living close to the earth, closer (we think) to our everyday needs, an extension of that fleeting transcendental harmony, a release from despair. So back to the land we go, looking to achieve harmony by shoveling shit like Uncle Eulie. When we find, however, that manure does not smell rich and earthy, we are likely to become disillusioned all over again. Manure only smells rich and earthy in bad romantic novels. Elsewhere it smells like old cow shit, which it is: nothing but cow shit removed in time and put to use. I may be headed for a pathetic regression but at least I am not romantic about cow shit.

What is pertinent here about the story of the manure storage level is that while the Shakers certainly found working by hand to be valuable, they were not at all reluctant to develop labor-saving schemes or devices. In the outside world the communities were known as much for their inventions as for their superior products. The list goes on and on and includes such surprises as the flat broom, the common clothes pin, cut nails, metal pens, the first one-horse wagon used in this country, a threshing machine, water turbine, rotary harrow, and (my favorite) the circular saw, invented by a Sister. The purpose of all of these inventions was to save labor, for it was not the quantity of labor that held virtue, but its quality; its value lay in consecration alone. It is not just *hard* work that will find Uncle Eulie his way to heaven, but *good* work. Insofar as labor-saving schemes and devices allowed the Shaker community to excel in "works that are truly virtuous and useful to man in this life," and allowed further attention to one's own spiritual life, they were not only desirable, according to Father Joseph Meacham, Mother Ann's second successor, they were inseparable from the pursuit of the Simple Life.

By assuming the opposite, that the Simple Life entails a return to some self-consciously old-fashioned way of doing things, we have gone astray before we have begun. There is a law, notes Lessing, that where the technology exists to accomplish something, if it is not used — regardless of the reason it is not used — there is no real or lasting satisfaction for the people involved. "They all *know* in the end, even if the realization is delayed — sometimes deliberately, and by themselves, in efforts of self deception — that their labours, their lives, are without real purpose." Consequently, they (or we) are subject to "the same constellation of ills and general malaise." In other words, the Simple Life continues to elude us. The regression that takes its place is rightly called pathetic because it cannot escape despair.

Mother Ann said, "Do all your work as though you had a thousand years to live, and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow." This is not a management strategy we are likely to encounter today. Today's manager will certainly be concerned with production, but production, whether of goods or services, has become considerable only insofar as it is tied to profitability, and profit, as we all should know by now, is the sole end of production. This is not news today and it was not news to Mother Ann when she led her band of Believers away from the dark satanic mills of the Industrial Revolution in eighteenth-century Manchester. We have simply carried things to new technological heights, enabling us to accumulate vast profits whose primary role is to provide capital for production of still more profits from goods and services that have, for the most part, less and less to do with the necessities of daily life. Consuming beyond our needs has therefore become an economic necessity, in recent times tantamount to patriotic duty. Consequently, the real function of the leisure time we are so proud and so jealous of is to allow us to consume, and so contribute our fair share to the gross national product.

If the idea of consecrated labor is lost to us, then the idea of an inclusive, interdependent community for whom consecrated work is beneficial will certainly escape us altogether. We have largely replaced the community so vital to the Shakers with the "lifestyle enclave," a phenomenon identified by the authors of *Habits of the Heart*[2] as a successor to communities in our age, one that lacks the shared history and unifying purpose of a community, and is defined primarily by "similarities of appearance, consumption, and leisure activities." At its worst the lifestyle enclave is no more than an egotistical projection of distorted psuedo-ontological individualism. If the members of an enclave are attracted to the "pleasures" of simple living at all, it is likely to be in much the same way as Marie Antoinette. She maintained a "country village" on the grounds of Versailles where she and her ladies-in-waiting could retire

when fatigued by the duties of court, there to find relaxation in wearing the latest in designer peasant costumes and milking the cows. Someone else cleaned up the shit.

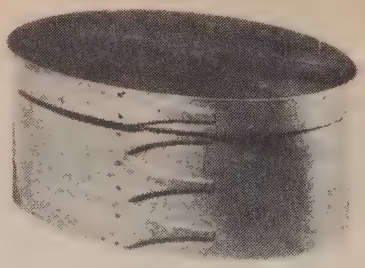
A prescription for avoiding the pathetic regression and achieving the Simple Life seems to be called for here, but I do not have one. Perhaps no one does. Even though the Shakers offer a potent example of the Simple Life, it is clear from their history that they did not themselves begin with a rational, theoretical statement on the value and usefulness of communal agrarian life. That came later. They began with Mother Ann's visions, which are rooted in the numinous, not the rational. If this distinction means little to us it is because the numinous is manifest primarily in the unconscious and we know it, if at all, symbolically. A symbol, Jung tells us, is the "best possible expression for a complex fact not yet clearly apprehended by consciousness." It is not mere allegory, or semiotic sign, where this or that thing "stands for" something else; rather a symbol is indefinite, with many meanings, "pointing to something not easily defined and therefore not fully known." The difference between a symbol and a sign, then, is related to the difference between the numinous and the rational, and our apprehension of them is related to the difference I alluded to earlier between understanding and explanation.

Explain is from Latin *explanare,* to make level; *understand* from Old English *understandan,* to stand under. This is why it is better to understand than to explain: to stand under a thing is to know its depth; leveling deprives it of depth, and it is only by plumbing the depths of a thing that we can begin to know it. According to Kierkegaard, understanding begets passion, "the tension and resilience of inner being," whereas explanation begets "only affectation . . . correlative with an interior emptiness." Like signs that stand for things rather than standing under them, explanation skims along the surface, bypassing the question of purpose that understanding is wholly concerned with. The difference between explanation and understanding is the difference between outer and inner being, between objective and subjective, the difference between the immanent and the transcendent.

For those attentive enough to the spirit, the drive towards transcendence will eventually be revealed as a quest for wholeness rooted in the psyche and in the soul. Unfortunately most of us have a very short attention span. Fired perhaps by some flash of understanding that what now defines our lives is insufficient and unfulfilling, we rush off to find what is missing. My first reaction to the overwhelming feeling in the Shaker barn is to run off to upstate New York, buy a farm and shovel shit. Perhaps it is fortunate that I cannot afford to do this just yet, since it would be, essentially, an attempt to literalize the unconscious image of transcendence. The images of the unconscious are, however, the symbols of the spirit, and spirit is concerned more with the numinous, more with the transcendent, than with the literal. Literalism is a conscious ego viewpoint concerned less with immanence, more with the rational. Much more.

My yearning after the Simple Life is, then, a symbol of something as yet incompletely understood, something whose end is less easily defined than a farm in upstate New York. There is no need to worry that in thinking this way I will err on the side of too much attention to the transcendent, loosening my grasp on day-to-day life, and throwing away the very obvious and important benefits of reason that have made science, technology, civilization, and my life in the city possible. I have already followed the rest of society so far the other way that this is unlikely — the danger is all from the other side, of loosening the symbolic grasp on the spirit. "A human being is spirit," writes Kierkegaard; "But what is spirit? Spirit is the self." He does not mean the ego self, or not just the ego self, but the psychological self, which includes all aspects of being and their relationships to each other. The self is "a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. . . . " In other words — Jung's words — self is a transcendent concept, an archetype of wholeness.

There is nothing complicated or esoteric about transcendence — its aim is simplicity: to bring the



conscious and the unconscious closer together, allowing us the necessity of symbolic understanding and the reliability, continuity and directedness of rational explanation. It only seems mysterious because of our persistent habit of ignoring everything except the literal, the outer aspects of being, the ego. The synthesis Kierkegaard speaks of is made necessary only by the very artificial dichotomy between immanence and transcendence that has ruled our world view since Descartes convinced us there is a difference between thinking and being. The Simple Life is not so much a reunion of thinking and being as a recognition that the apparent disunion is a product of explaining things without understanding them. " 'Tis the gift to be simple," says the best-known Shaker hymn, and this is perhaps the key: simplicity is a quality of spirit, and like all such qualities it is given and not gotten; it is there all along and most attempts to find it, attempts to lead a simple life, get back to basics, get ahead in life, climb the corporate ladder, or consume our way to happiness are all pathetic regressions. They send us out looking for something that is not really missing in the first place.

When I reflect on my walk around the manure storage level, the round barn in Hancock seems a very fine example of true simplicity: it is a place of function — pure, simple, efficient — and at the same time a place of deep spirituality. Like the Temple at the Center of the World, its very shape is a symbol of wholeness and perfection. The Shakers did not set out to build a temple, but they did. A true temple. What they set out to build was a barn, and they did that too. A true barn. True barn. True temple. There is no difference. Nowadays we think there is a great difference between a barn and a temple, but this is true only when either is built (as it usually is) with the assumption that there should be a difference. "Hands to work, hearts to God," said Mother Ann: the hands work in the barn, the heart communes with God in the temple. They are one in the round barn. To understand this is to understand simplicity.

Unfortunately, I am not among the few who can bear to stand under a thing and feel its full weight bearing down. This is why real understanding has usually come only in quick flashes, and why I so often feel it necessary to offer up some explanation afterwards. This is, of course, what I have been doing here. Like the boy in the second of the ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen Buddhism, I have only just found the traces of the bull, the eternal principle of life. In truth, as the first picture tells us, the bull has never really gone astray. Instead, the boy has turned his back on his true nature and cannot see it. He is entangled by greed, dread, and confused ideas of right and wrong. If he is anything like me he is also bogged down trying to work out a suitable reason for the bull's absence.

"Through scriptures and teachings he has come to understand some things," we are told — just some things. Like the searching boy I may have understood "that the objective world is a reflection of the Self," but there is still a long way to go before I see, catch, tame or take the bull home, let alone before I transcend him or myself and finally realize that there was nowhere to go in the first place, except to wander around the marketplace smiling people into enlightenment. It is there, in the marketplace, that I expect to find the Simple Life, if I ever get there. In the meantime, it is only provisionally that I can even be said to have noticed the traces of the elusive bull.

What I understood from the Shakers about my own desire to leave the city and go back to the agrarian life is that the Simple Life is not something to *return* to, it is instead something to *turn* to. "When true simplicity is gained," says the Shaker hymn, "To turn, turn will be our delight/ Till by turning, turning we come round right." The pathetic regression is a likely detour somewhere along that circuitous route, an attempt to *re*turn to a place that I have, actually, not yet reached, because I have not yet realized that it is the same place I set out from. If and when I do finally make my way back to the farm (and I hope it will not be too long before I do) I will not find regression any less seductive for knowing its shortcomings, nor any easier to avoid: inner being moves naturally towards transcendence, not automatically. From where I stand now, although I have not forgotten the intensity of my yearning to leave the farm in the first place, it is impossible not to think that even the pathetic regression is in some ways better, that life on the farm is somehow qualitatively superior to life in the city. Perhaps it is, but I doubt it. The marketplace can as easily be in the city as in the country. But either way it would be a shame, having finally caught the trail of the eternal principle I seek, if I now failed to get on with the search, remaining instead stuck at the beginning, pondering and explaining what might lie ahead, while I stand up to my ankles in shit, the mere traces of the bull I pursue. ■

1. *The Sirian Experiments:* Doris Lessing; Random House, 1982.

2. *Habits of the Heart:* Robert N. Bellah et al. University of California Press, 1985.

A curious irony that two of the best books on the Great Depression are now out of print. Don't let it stop you. Some things are worth remembering. —*Sallie Tisdale*

The Great Crash

Those who produced the current economic situation still profess confidence, but when a structure gets this shaky, a prudent observer wonders what lies ahead. Although the future always adds a fillip to events that echo the past, perhaps studying history will give a few clues.

The last time the economy died seriously was called the Great Depression. Galbraith's ***The Great Crash*** *is the universal choice for getting acquainted with the era. He flavors economic insights with a fine, dry humor to show us the people, the schemes and the atmosphere of a time when greed was the approved national pastime.*

As a history of America and as a chronicle of the foolishness and lies that people in high places can generate, this book is invaluable. It's gone through 13 printings, but is currently out of print. Ask your library. —*Dick Fugett*

The Great Crash of 1929
John K. Galbraith
1980
OUT OF PRINT
Avon Books
P. O. Box 767
Dresden, TX 38225

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During 1929 more than a hundred issues on the New York Stock Exchange were subject to manipulative operations, in which members of the Exchange or their partners had participated. The nature of these operations varied somewhat but, in a typical operation, a number of traders pooled their resources to boom a particular stock. They appointed a pool manager, promised not to double-cross each other by private operations, and the pool manager then took a position in the stock which might also include shares contributed by the participants. This buying would increase prices and attract the interest of people watching the tape across the country. The interest of the latter would then be further stimulated by active selling and buying, all of which gave the impression that something big was afloat. Tipsheets and market commentators would tell of exciting developments in the offing. If all went well, the public would come in to buy, and prices would rise on their own. The pool manager would then sell out, pay himself a percentage of the profits, and divide the rest with his investors.

Growing Up

Focus on just one family, and watch as it enters, survives and finally emerges from the Great Depression. The author of ***Growing Up*** *is New York Times columnist Russell Baker, and long before he gained fame as a journalist he'd paid his dues. The Depression did a lot of the collecting.*

As we watch his family's struggle to survive, we pick up a kid's perceptions of being down and out. Baker sold bales of newspapers for 2¢ each, but it didn't keep the family from the last resort — going on relief. It meant food in the cupboard but translated as a stark sign of personal failure.

Hard times come, but they'll also go. Baker went from survival to success. Here's his story, an underdog's look at history. —*Dick Fugett*

Growing Up
Russell Baker
1982; 348 pp.
$3.95
($5.45 postpaid) from:
New American Library
P. O. Box 999
Bergenfield, NJ 07621
or Whole Earth Access

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The daily firings produced by the withering economy offered loopholes of opportunity for a young man who kept his eyes open. One night just before we arrived from Virginia, Uncle Allen called at the Newark plant of the Kruger Beverage Company to ask if they needed a salesman.

"I don't need anybody right now, but there may be an opening in the morning," the sales-crew chief told him. This was Depression code talk. Uncle Allen had heard it before. Translated, it meant: "We're going to fire a couple of men later tonight and will need a new salesman tomorrow who will do the work of both for less salary than we're paying either one." The man suggested he come back in the morning to speak to the manager, and added a piece of advice: "And be dressed like you're going to your own wedding." That evening Uncle Allen bought a pair of spats and put $5 down on a black overcoat with a velvet collar. Next morning he had a $30-a-week job selling carbonated beverages.

Hard Times

Call it a people's oral history of the thirties. ***Hard Times*** *offers us the Depression as seen through the eyes of the working people. Author Studs Terkel talked to Pullman porters and IWW organizers, to seamstresses and coal miners. For good measure he's added the recollections of the indolent and the lawmakers. The contrast is wonderful, for their perceptions not only illustrate the extremes of the era but also remind us that it's risky to divide history into good guys and bad.* —*Dick Fugett*

Hard Times
Studs Terkel
1970; 532 pp.
OUT OF PRINT
Pantheon Books/
Random House
400 Hahn Road
Westminster, MD 21157

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Oh, I remember having to move out of our house. My father had brought in a team of horses and wagon. We had always lived in that house, and we couldn't understand why we were moving out. When we got to the other house, it was a worse house, a poor house. That must have been around 1934. I was about six years old.

It's known as the North Gila Valley, about fifty miles north of Yuma. My dad was being turned out of his small plot of land. He had inherited this from his father, who had homesteaded it. I saw my two, three other uncles also moving out. And for the same reason. The bank had foreclosed on the loan.

If the local bank approved, the Government would guarantee the loan and small farmers like my father would continue in business. It so happened the president of the bank was the guy who most wanted our land. We were surrounded by him: he owned all the land around us. Of course, he wouldn't pass the loan. . . .

We all of us climbed into an old Chevy that my dad had. And then we were in California, and migratory workers.
—*Cesar Chavez*

Bird of Life, Bird of Death

Two years living among the Highland Mayans of Guatemala exposed me to the beauty of the land and its native people. My stay also exposed me to one of the most brutal campaigns of repression and fear that could exist in this world. To describe both personalities of Guatemala in the same work is difficult, but an avid birdwatcher named Jonathan Evan Maslow has done an admirable job of it. His well-written account of his hunt for the Resplendent Quetzal brings across the sights, sounds and smells of Guatemala as well as the ever-present fear that has come to permeate the lives of the citizens. Ornithological research preceded his visit, and historical, political and natural research followed it. The results are a most complete rendering of a country in the throes of a painful but hidden civil war. —*Cliff Figallo*

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The cloud forest is one place where all the capacity of language, art, and even natural science are simply not up to the job of conveying the bewildering complexity, the infinite variety, and the daunting sense of how many of tropical nature's ways are still beyond our ken. Relations of predator and prey both delicate and savage. Food webs both simple and enormously complex. Private harmonies of insects with plants, birds with plants. Beetles that spend their entire lives hidden under one leaf, and moths that spend their entire lives mimicking other species. Whole communities that we barely know exist, and plants no human has ever seen or put a name on. The jungle keeps its best secrets to itself.

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Thus did General Justo Rufino Barrios turn the churches into banks, the sacred bird into money, spiritual values into profane economic values. In the end he legalized debt peonage, a system under which cash advanced to the Indians accumulated into debts inherited by their children. Where the Mayans had been bound to ancestral lands by the whole spiritual fabric of maize cultivation, a money debt now bound the Indian generations to their *patron* and his *finca*. The Indians had to accept it. What choice did they have? Those who rebelled were killed as common criminals. Most submitted, and kept smaller *milpas* on inferior lands when they were seasonally unemployed on the coffee *fincas*. Some, however, fled like their ancestors before them into the forests. A new generation lived "under the trees, under the vines." Undoubtedly, the number of Indians fleeing into the mountains had a negative effect on the Quetzal population. The refugees began burning the cloud forest. Thousands of birds were slaughtered and sold to skin traders, who smuggled the specimens out of Guatemala to stock the European ornithological cabinets in vogue at the time. . . .

Bird of Life, Bird of Death
Jonathan Evan Maslow
1986; 249 pp.
$17.95
postpaid from:
Simon & Schuster
Attn.: Mail Order
200 Old Tappan Road
Old Tappan, NJ 07675
or Whole Earth Access

Bitter Fruit

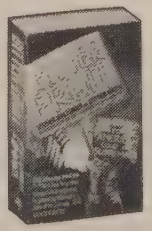
By the 1950s, United Fruit Company had become a government in itself in Guatemala. Its banana operation and ownership of transport and communication systems made it the nation's largest business entity by far. In 1951 president Jacobo Arbenz took office and began an agrarian reform program to give land to the peasants. Arbenz had just signed his death warrant. ***Bitter Fruit*** *tells the tangled story of United Fruit and the CIA in Guatemala.*

United Fruit responded to the land reform with a deadly effective public relations blitz for American consumption. Riding the wave of the McCarthy "red menace" hysteria, it mobilized public and legislative opinion against the communist threat in Central America, assisted by the media.

When the smoke cleared in 1954, a CIA-chosen flunky, Castillo Armas, was in power. The operation was proclaimed a great victory for democracy.

Bitter Fruit *sharply reverses that thinking, and serves as one kind of reference for anyone charting the course of our nation.* —*Dick Fugett*
[Suggested by Shel Kaphan]

Protest in Santiago of U.S.-backed coup against Arbenz.



Bitter Fruit
Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer
1982; 320 pp.
$8.95
postpaid from:
Doubleday and Company
Direct Mail Order
501 Franklin Avenue
Garden City, NY 11530
or Whole Earth Access

United Fruit had for years been the largest employer in Guatemala as well as the largest landowner and exporter, and during the 1930s its holdings and power increased even further. In 1936, the firm signed a ninety-nine-year agreement with General Ubico to open a second plantation, this time on the Pacific coast at Tiquisate. Ubico granted the company the kind of concessions to which it had become accustomed: total exemption from external taxation, duty-free importation of all necessary goods and a guarantee of low wages. Ubico, in fact, insisted that laborers be paid a daily wage of no more than 50 cents in order to keep other Guatemalan workers from demanding better pay. Around the same time, the company's relationship with Minor Keith's International Railways of Central America (IRCA) was formalized. United Fruit effectively took over IRCA, which owned two very important properties: the only Atlantic port in the country, Puerto Barrios, and virtually every mile of railroad in Guatemala. (The IRCA brought another advantage: it did not have to pay any taxes to the government until 1954 under Arbenz.)

Thus United Fruit exercised enormous economic control over Guatemala. Any business seeking to export goods to the eastern or southern ports of the United States (or Europe or Africa) had to use Puerto Barrios, and since the company owned the town and all its port facilities, it had nearly complete authority over the nation's international commerce. In addition, the only means of moving products to Puerto Barrios was the IRCA rail line, whose schedule and rate structure were also controlled by United Fruit. The Fruit Company's "great white fleet" of more than fifty freighters alone had regular access to Puerto Barrios, and the company's intimacy with successive Guatemalan strongmen allowed it numerous "side deals" such as running the telegraph service.

Seeing the Forest *and* the Trees

Reed Noss's article in our last issue, "Do We Really Want Diversity?", prompted two responses that continue the discussion of how best to manage and preserve our national forests. Noss explained the flaw inherent in looking only at species diversity as a yardstick for measuring the health of forest ecosystems. The problem is that disturbing a forest by logging it allows non-native species to invade, and while this increases the total number of species, it can also eliminate species native to the forest.

Christopher Earle is a Ph.D. student in forest ecology at the University of Wisconsin. David Tenenbaum lives in Wisconsin and wrote the article on drought in the Sahel desert in the Summer 1986 WER. —*Richard Nilsen*

MR. NOSS'S POINT, that diversity has both quantitative and qualitative aspects, is beyond controversy. Similarly, it is true that some forest managers have used edge diversity as a justification for clearcutting. But the implication that forest management practices in general are aimed at logging and justified as increasing habitat diversity is not well supported by the evidence.

A lot of forest managers freely admit that biological diversity of any kind is completely irrelevant to their management goals. The best example comes from Scotland, where afforestation actually reduces wildlife populations and no effort is made to make those Sitka spruce forests attractive to either wildlife or people. A slightly less extreme management philosophy exists in much of the pine forest of the southeastern U.S., where game management at least gets lip service.

No one that I know of has argued that massive clearcutting, such as has been practiced extensively in the coast ranges of the U.S., is good for diversity. Rather, a study recently published in the *Journal of Landscape Ecology* points out that diversity peaks when only 25 percent of the land has been clearcut, and that the greatest loss of diversity in old-growth forests occurs in the first 30 percent of clearcutting. So, the diversity argument — regardless of whether we're talking quality or quantity of species — is entirely false in areas that have really been raped by the loggers.

Finally, I want to say a few words about what diversity is. Mr. Noss, a wildlife ecologist, only speaks of plants and vertebrates. A lot of people think that way. Did you know that over 200 species of fungi are symbiotic with Douglas fir? Hundreds of species of insects may live in different microhabitats within a rotting old-growth tree; in fact, there's more living biomass in a dead tree than in a live one. Hundreds more species of bacteria live in the forest floor and play crucial roles in things like the nitrogen and sulfur cycles. Do the forest managers think about these species when they talk about "diversity"? They do not. Diversity is one of the most difficult, controversial and poorly understood concepts in all of ecology, and when you hear someone speak of it, be prepared for a snow job. An old-growth forest is a temple of the earth; Lao-Tzu knew it, John Muir knew it, and millions of people today know it, not least the ecologists who study these places. That's all you really need to remember. Go out this weekend and refresh that memory, and write or call the local district ranger (Information has his number, and the library has his address) and refresh his memory.

—Christopher J. Earle

An Immodest Proposal for Biological Diversity

"WHAT WE WANT IS the full complement of native species in natural or normal patterns of abundance. Call that native diversity. And tell the land managers about it."

So Reed Noss wisely concludes "Do We Really Want Diversity?". In the face of Forest Service plans to increase logging and roadbuilding in both of Wisconsin's national forests, a group of conservationists and botanists is promoting its own plan to allow both biological diversity and logging.

The Wisconsin Forest Conservation Task Force wants the Forest Service to preserve native habitats and species instead of fragmenting the forests with roads, clearcuts and thinning. Their plan was persuasive enough to be adopted by the Supervisor of Chequamegon National Forest, but the regional forester vetoed him partly because of pressure by western timber producers fearful of possible precedents. The appeals continue.

The Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests were established early this century on land that had been clearcut and burned. Today, very little old-growth, climax vegetation is left in the forests. If the Forest Service has its way, little of the old growth will return. Their plan is to clearcut about 60 percent of the Chequamegon and selectively thin 35 percent, leaving 5 percent of the forest for research, wilderness and habitat preservation.

The Task Force alternative proposes consolidating both clearcuts and preserves. This way, 17 percent of the 884,000-acre Chequamegon National Forest would be set aside for "Diversity Management Areas," or DMAs, of at least 50,000 acres each. For the 665,000-acre Nicolet National Forest, at least 100,000 acres would be DMAs. Roadbuilding and timber harvesting would be prohibited in the DMAs, but hunting, skiing, fishing, and small fuelwood collecting permitted. Thus, the conservationists say their plan would encourage multiple use of national forests as required by law.

The proposals reduce neither Forest Service timber goals nor clearcut acreage. Task Force members say that truly preserving some areas is better ecologically and scientifically than creating a vast, disturbed "industrial forest" in the north woods.

Though timber industry opponents call the DMAs a subterfuge to gain more wilderness, the conservationists counter that Forest Service regulations acknowledge "that some of the land will be used for less than all of the resouces" and that federal laws stipulate preservation of diverse species and habitat.

The alternative plan is based partly on a principle of island biogeography which relates preserve size to changing species numbers and ratios. The Task Force claims this principle also applies to islands of old-growth forest in a sea of early-succession species.

In principle, species die out more slowly in large reserves than in small ones, and large reserves are best for saving threatened native species. Though optimum reserve size is debatable, few biologists maintain that

small reserves will preserve species better than large ones in the long run.

In proposing blocks of 50,000 acres for each reserve, the conservationists looked at "blow-downs" and fires that can destroy up to 10,000 acres at a time. If a DMA is to preserve habitat, it must be larger than such catastrophes.

Elsewhere, conservationists are also upping the ante. In Costa Rica, University of Pennsylvania biologist Daniel Janzen is getting good cooperation from Costa Ricans for his proposal for a 173,000-acre Guanacaste National Park to preserve the vanishing dry tropical forest.

The timber and pulp industries are screaming about the DMA proposal, despite reassurance from Chequamegon supervisor Jack Wolter. "There would be no change in the amounts of timber that would be harvested," Wolter wrote to the timber producers in April, 1986, in defense of adopting the DMAs in his forest plan.

ISLAND BIOGEOGRAPHY was discovered by studying "land bridge" islands, which were connected to continents by land when ocean levels were low, during the last Ice Age. Assuming that these islands housed the same species as the continents while the bridge was above water, scientists subtract existing species counts from counts on the nearby continent. They find the rate of local extinctions by dividing by the time since the islands became isolated.

Consistently, species disappear more slowly on larger islands. Explanations include: some species need big territories; widely dispersed populations can escape epidemics; species need enough genetic diversity to avoid inbreeding and adapt to new conditions; and large populations reduce random factors such as weather, fire, and poor male-female ratios.

Though island biogeography has been repeatedly corroborated in the last 30 years, the Forest Service says it is an unproven basis for planning. The conservationists respond that well-known phenomena support the large-scale predictions of the island biogeography theory.

Take whitetail deer. University of Wisconsin botanist William Alverson says deer eat Eastern Hemlock seedlings "like ice cream" and prevent reproduction of this climax species. Though the Forest Service boasts of gloomy groves of healthy hemlocks, close inspection reveals that they are what Janzen calls the "living dead" — old trees with no descendants. To stem the trend against deer browsing on hemlocks, the DMAs must be big enough to inhibit deer, which prefer disturbed areas to old-growth, from reaching the forest interior.

Take edges, whose various habitats encourage game and weedy species. Though edges have hallowed standing among those who prefer deer, conservationists see them as places from which early-succession species — weedy trees, birds and mammals — invade old-growth.

Intensive management poses other challenges to old-growth. For example, hemlock and white pine seeds normally sprout in "tip-up mounds" created by uprooted fallen trees. But in forests that are repeatedly cut, aged trees no longer fall, and reproduction among hemlock and white pine becomes rarer.

These problems are not limited to national forests. A recent article on the national parks in *Nature*, by William Newmark of the University of Michigan, concluded, "'. . . the natural post-establishment loss of mammalian species in 14 western North American national parks is consistent with these predictions of the land-bridge hypothesis [of island biogeography] and that *all but the largest western North American national parks are too small to retain intact mammalian fauna.*" [Emphasis added.] —David Tenenbaum

• For more information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Wisconsin Forest Conservation Task Force c/o William Alversen, Botany Dept., University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

Tire blanket along stream in Little Kanawha, WV.

Water Resources Protection Technology
J. Toby Tourbier
and Richard Westmacott
1981; 178 pp.
$32
($34.50 postpaid) from:
Urban Land Institute
1090 Vermont Avenue NW
Third Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Water Resources Protection Technology

A book about helping water and humans live in greater harmony. It is not a book to read, although coursing through the pages is always interesting. It is a book about preventive medicine — the watershed is the patient — and about healing creeks, rivers and hill slopes that have been damaged by mismanagement of waterflow. There is no book which more simply lays out the consequences of altering nature's pathways and gives almost every option (with costs) on how to mesh human plumbing to the land's.
—Peter Warshall

•

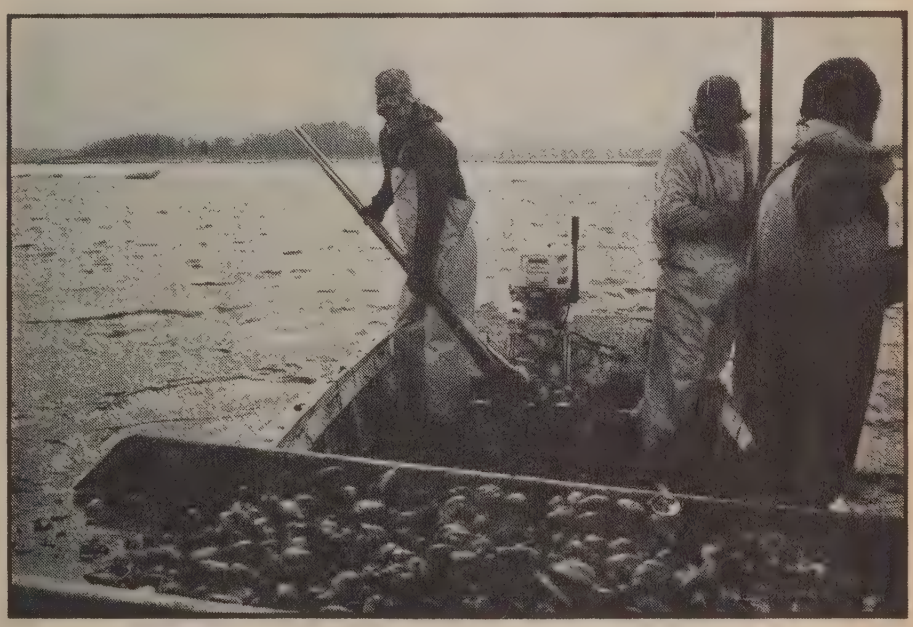
Old Tires. Old tires, joined together by steel cables or bands, can form an effective protective lining. They collect silt and become permanently imbedded, and in the process enable roots of vegetation cover to establish themselves. Approximately 5,000 tires per acre are needed. An A-frame has been used to lower panels of tires measuring 11 tires across and 6 tires high onto stream banks. This alternative should not be used if siltation and revegetation within the tires are not likely to occur. These blankets are highly flexible and will adjust themselves to changes in the configuration of the channel. However, this form of erosion protection is unlikely to be socially acceptable in many situations.

Men's Lives

The striped bass, for most commercial fishermen of Long Island's South Fork, "represents the difference between bare survival and a decent living," writes Peter Matthiessen. ***Men's Lives*** *is both history and memoir, a flawlessly — and sorrowfully — written narrative of the lives of many generations of fishing families. The relatively few remaining are beseiged by taxes, regulations, restrictive bass catches legislated by professional sportsmen's groups, and the inflation of property values resulting from Long Island's resort communities. The baymen and surfmen emerge as independent, stubborn, tough people. Says one: "You don't get rich, but I'd say I was content." This particular story of some particular men's lives, coupled with a fine format, lovely photographs, and line drawings, is an environmental story in the most literal sense.*

—Sallie Tisdale

Men's Lives
Peter Matthiessen
1986; 339 pp.
$29.95
($30.95 postpaid) from:
Random House
Attn.: Order Department
400 Hahn Road
Westminster, MD 21157
or Whole Earth Access



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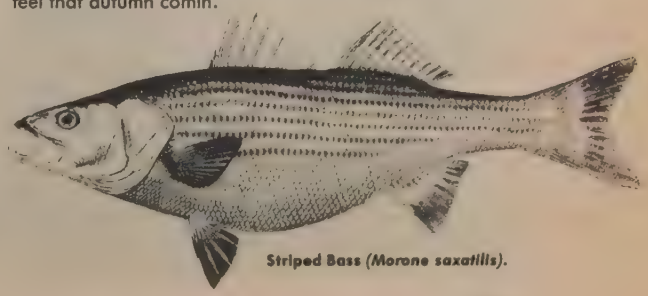
One early winter day, in a cold twilight, John Cole and I stopped in Francis Lester's yard, where Francis was emptying fish from his ancient truck. In the old days, cod had been plentiful by November, coming in so close to the beach that at the end of the haul-seining season a few would appear among the bass, but now they were fewer and farther off the shore. That afternoon Francis had lifted his cod trawl in the ocean, and this cold, arduous, and dangerous work had rewarded him with just three cod, which he tossed in disgust across the yard; he was wet and cold, and maybe he'd box and ship them in the morning. But that night there was heavy snow, and in the morning he could not find the codfish. He forgot about them until late February or March, when their woebegone eyes and broken tails emerged after a thaw. In a forlorn gesture of protest and futility — though he could ill afford the waste of money — Francis boxed and shipped the half-rotted cod to the Fulton Fish Market. "B'god, boy," he told John later, "got full price for 'em, too! Them people don't give us nothin until fish is scarce, and then they'll buy goddamn near *anything!*"

•

In 1958 the Army Corps of Engineers, at the instigation of a rich and influential summer resident who desired to shore up his dune house at Georgica at the public expense, had begun the construction of a series of ocean groins, or jetties, up to 750 feet long, to stabilize the unstable ocean beach. The vast enterprise failed to take into account the very strong set, or current, alongshore, and the sea carved huge scallops in the beach between these rock piles, which had no more place on the open Atlantic coast than that doomed fish pier that broke up at Napeague in 1881. Captain Frank Lester called the engineers "damned fools," and all those with experience of the ocean beach agreed that the jetties had seriously worsened the great damage caused by the line storm of March 1961, with its violent northeasterly gales. The storm picked off some houses built on sand that had no business on the high dunes in the first place, and temporarily laid bare stretches of peat, scored by cart tracks and ox prints of colonial times, that had long since been covered by the sands. The high dunes at Sagaponack where Bud Topping had a big green summer tent were washed away, and Southampton Town replaced the dunes with a large parking lot, trash cans, and toilets, together with a big poster picture of the politician who wished to take the credit for all this progress.

•

"Water's chippin up there now — was slick a minute ago," Benny Havens said, sniffing the wind. "See that black at the edge of the slick, do ya? Ain't no fish under that bait; we'd seen 'em. Just four-five bluefish gulls dippin, is all; them little-gulls got their bellyful, comin ashore now. But all that bait is a good sign, maybe got pushed down here from the east'rd by them weakfish that must be comin round the Point, lookin for cold water. Bass will be herdin up now, too, maybe they can feel that autumn comin."



Striped Bass *(Morone saxatilis)*.

Village children of the Kabre region in Togo.

GROWING UP WHITE IN AFRICA

BY TERESA MYERS

IF WE ARE VERY BLESSED or lucky in life, we will find a place whose heartbeat echoes our own — where our own essential rhythm slides into place with the quiet surety of tumblers in a lock — and we know we are home from the first sniff of air, the first blast of heat as the airplane door opens, the first blare of sound that greets us. So it was with West Africa and me.

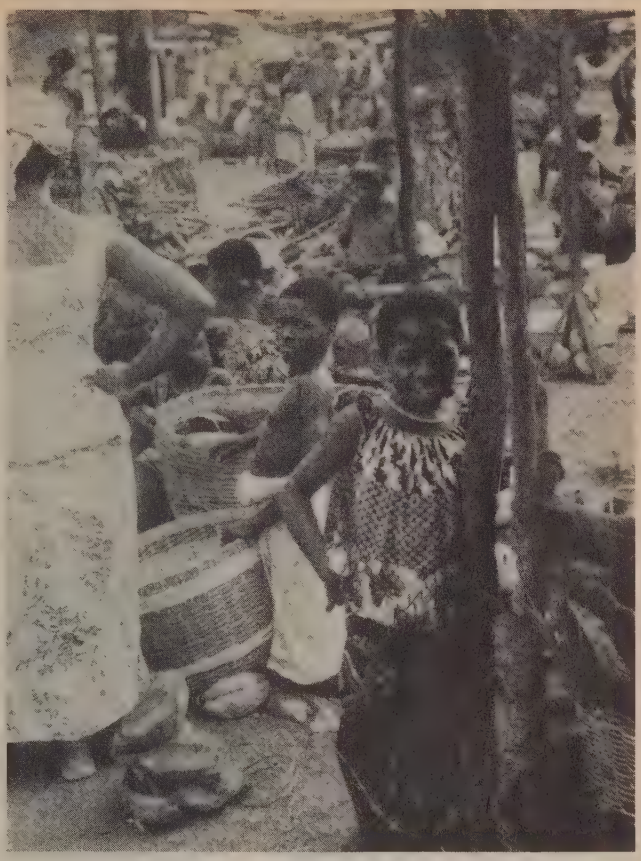
I lived with my family in Africa for eight years, off and on from the time I was two until I was twelve. This was the Africa of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Eisenhower and Kennedy and Johnson were president and America was equated more with munificence than imperialism. This was an Africa where Americans were welcomed because our government was paying for the building and operation of badly needed schools, hospitals, wells and farm projects. We were emotional light-years away from the concussive effects of the 1970s and 1980s.

Much of the Africa I knew is gone for good.

Viewed through Western eyes, Africa was a funny and wondrous place to live, and so it seems to me now. At the time I thought it was perfectly marvelous and at the same time perfectly normal. I should stop here and give my parents credit — a lot of Americans hated living in Africa and that feeling was communicated to their children, who then hated it too. Africa enthralled my parents and they revelled in it, thus treating my sister and me to the best childhood I can imagine. It was as if our whole universe was a playground. There were only a half-dozen or so white children in the areas where we lived, so we were easily recognizable and benignly protected by everyone. If we walked into the fishing communities or villages, someone would warmly welcome us; if we wan-

The sixties were halcyon days of yore in more ways than one; while we played in the streets here, our government played with its own peculiar brand of colonialism abroad. Teresa Myers, barely thirty years old and without a shred of memory of the American sixties, offers a view into a childhood spent in Africa, in the last idyllic days of the white man. Teresa now works part-time for the Office of Technology Assessment, a branch of the U.S. Congress, and is a freelance writer. The photos, from Teresa's childhood, are by her father. —*Sallie Tisdale*

Photos by Gerald Schwab



▲ The author as a child, with a visiting naval officer.

► The village markets of Togo are social as well as economic centers.

dered too far, someone would put us on the backs of their bicycles and bring us home. Many Americans, I think, tried to force Africa to fit their heartbeat, their pulse, their schedules. It could not be done. We did not even try it.

My world was Technicolor then — the vivid, exciting surface world of children, not so multitextured as that of an adult perhaps, but not so bleached and jaded either. Brighter, bigger, more pungent — like a giant Peter Max poster, colors bursting everywhere, fluid and electric. Africa assaults the senses, it overwhelms, invades, drowns and envelops the visitor; certainly it did me. When I look back at the quality of my memories, what strikes me is how intense they are — the fierceness of the heat, the whiteness of the sun, the noise level of the market, and the smell of fish drying in the sun.

Have I romanticized Africa in my mind or my memories, the labyrinth secret places I take solace from when adult life becomes too demanding, too complex? I don't think so. I doubt that childhood alone could have so blurred my vision and spurred my wonder. It was, simply, that I lost my heart to the place.

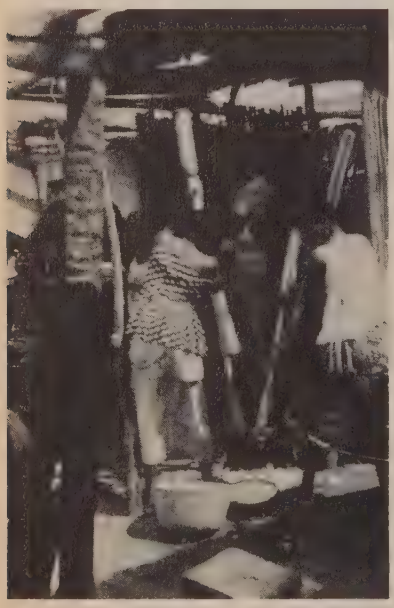
IN 1959, at the request of the State Department, we left the United States behind and entered the completely different world of Togo, West Africa. Previously known as Togoland, it was a German colony later divided between France and Britain in 1919, at the outcome of World War I. In 1956, voters in British Togoland joined a liberated Gold Coast and those two territories became independent as Ghana in 1957. French Togoland, where we lived, shortened its name and acquired independence in 1960. The influence of these three "protectors," Germany, France and England, was revealed in somewhat quizzical ways. One of the upcountry chiefs used a German helmet as his crown, another used an English bed-cap. And, because the British eat eggs for breakfast and the French do not, only Ghana had eggs for sale. Hence, if you wanted eggs, you drove to Ghana. This was trickier than it sounds, as the Togolese drive on the right-hand side of the road and Ghanaians on the left, another leftover from the days of colonization, and the precise location of the border between the two was not always well marked. Everybody made their own guess, which on twisting one-lane roads made for an exciting trip for groceries. ►

Africa was a teacher. We had to acquire a great deal of knowledge that is perfectly useless almost anywhere else in the world. We learned that ironing kills the Tumba fly eggs that get laid in clothes as they flap in the breeze to dry. Without ironing, the eggs survive, and the larvae burrow into the skin and fester there until a little maggoty creature decides to crawl out. My mother learned to check the sheets before going to bed after she rolled over on the business end of a scorpion (we found a total of eight, and only the first one the hard way). We learned to avoid the shade of coconut palms after watching snakes and scorpions slip from the fronds above and come crashing to the ground. Too, we were taught to soak all our vegetables in diluted Clorox for twenty minutes to kill the parasites, boil all water, and use a snakebite kit.

We also learned to go to the market every day — not only because the lack of preservatives and refrigeration made it necessary, but also because it was the town's social center. Much of Togolese business was conducted outside, and the market acted as the hub of that activity.

The market was an enormous living entity with noise and commerce and a press of bodies and heat and sun everywhere. Men sold the meat, the only produce that was sold by weight and merited its own wrapping of old newspaper. It sat in the sun all day and had to be eaten immediately. Chickens were bought live, and sometimes walked away before they could be killed by the cook. Everything else was sold by the stack, never weighed and always bargained over, the negotiations presided over by the market women, or "mammies" as they called themselves.

There were women pounding yams or millet flour in tall wooden tubs with great wooden pestles, two or three working the same tub like some fan-



The market dance of mortar and pestle.

► A Nigerian woman in a festival headdress.

tastic choreographed ballet in which no one ever broke stride or got in another's way. The rhythmic *thud, thud, thud* played harmony to the market noises, and the women frequently sang as they worked. Hairdressers worked in the street, braiding and dying hair by using a mixture of shoe polish and coconut fibers. There were "moving restaurants" where a woman would squat down, make a fire, and prepare a dish of rice or boiled yams with tomatoes, palm oil, ginger, peanuts, and a little chicken.

There was a section where fetish dolls were sold, along with animal skulls, hair and skins, herbs and roots and cowry shells, which the witch doctors used to cure or curse people. Women and children alike wore fetish dolls in their shawls as a way of remembering a dead brother or sister. When visiting a hospital run by Catholic nurse-sisters, we saw two incubators side by side. In one was a tiny baby and in the other was a fetish doll in place of the twin who had died at birth. The same hospital had no milk for its patients, but did serve them wine three times daily.

In some senses, we had a very normal childhood — it just took place in a very different context. Most children may play dress-up in the course of things, but rarely have it put on the local television station as part of a fashion show. Or they may make puppets and put on a puppet show at one time or another, but they are unlikely to do it in a leper colony. Yet, there we were, in Oji, Eastern Nigeria, only a little nervous that leprosy was catching in the long run, trying not to stare at the stumps of fingers and hands and feet of the people around us.

Too, I remember spending hours upon hours squatting, African-fashion, at the end of our driveway, waiting for traders to come by with whom I could play draughts (checkers), or wari (a game with eight shallow holes dug into the ground and a series of playing stones), and bargain over their wares. I would wait there for hours, quietly resting on heel and haunch, with a bush mutt beside me. I collected bone animals that I haggled over one by one — shapes carved from bone and decorated with strips of fur and leather. I still have them, and when I unwrapped them recently they tumbled into my hands like jewels, all as familiar to me as someone else's teddy bear might be to them — the old, now eyeless, marabou that was my favorite, and the antelope with the broken horn that I couldn't bear to give up because it was so unusual.

It was a heady, thrilling, dizzying thing for a child — so many colors, smells, tastes, and sights, so much attention. Let my parents worry about the rabid dogs, the rainbow array of parasites, and the marvelous assortment of insects that flew, bit, burrowed, walked, crawled, and landed in every possible place in the house. For me, it was paradise.

SHORTLY AFTER we arrived in Togo, my father hauled into our garden one of the huge wooden boxes that carried our two-year supply of bedding, eating utensils, toilet paper and the like. There, he cut two windows and a small crawl space as a door in that great crate so my sister and I might use it as a playhouse. A lovely family of Hallowell's green mambas promptly moved in. We blithely consulted our well-thumbed edition of *West African Snakes,* by G. S. Cansdale, which said,

> "Mamba bites can certainly be fatal to humans. . . . There is little doubt that people are killed by Green Mambas in every part of West Africa every year. . . . "

The playhouse was dismantled. The mambas were caught and beheaded by the cook and the nightwatchman, who buried the heads in opposite corners of the yard from the bodies. (Apparently, if left to their own devices, they would grow back together, or so the lore goes.) The sacred rock python that lived in the brick pile outside our house was spared such a fate; it was caught and gently hoisted over the wall to find another home.

WE WERE welcomed into West African homes, their ceremonies, their lives and their schools — a French-language elementary school in Togo, and an English-speaking missionary school in Eastern Nigeria. We did not live in Lagos, the capitol of Nigeria, when we moved there in 1963. Instead, we lived among the Ebo tribe in a small town in the east called Enugu. A few months after we left, Enugu became the capitol of Biafra during what is still euphemistically called "the crisis" and would more appropriately be called a massacre. It was to break all our hearts.

Certainly, I was already aware of hardship and death. I don't think reality is a bad thing for children; just that the doses of it, like the sun, are stronger in Africa. I remember accepting, without a great deal of horror or reproach, what could be called the natural order of things: two enormous pythons in the Enugu zoo were killed, their graceful skeletons picked clean by hordes of army ants that marched through their cage. It was part of life, this process of dying, even when unspeakably cruel; and sometimes certain things had to die in order for others to continue living. The Ebos, of course, were killed in horrific numbers just shortly after we left the country — people that had been our friends, people that we

loved. That made far less innate sense to me. We left a dog behind in Enugu, gave it to our house servant who was fond of him, and the dog was eaten during the civil war and starvation that followed.

And yet, of all the countries we lived in, Nigeria was the most joyous to me, perhaps because by then I was an old hand with the snakebite kit and was fluent in the local pidgin-English dialect. Life was acknowledged to be hard, there were no false promises; but the sun was strong and the food hot and the music went straight to the blood of one's head like fermented palm wine, inviting any and everyone to join in the celebrations of the living.

SO WHY HAVE I not gone back to Africa? I have traveled extensively in my adult life and never returned there. I am frightened to do so. It has always seemed to me to be impossible to recapture a perfect moment and foolish to try; there are other, different, perfect moments to be found. Africa and I faced the outside world with less guile and more innocent aspirations then. Indeed, Africa struggled to embrace westernization far more eagerly than I, who was perfectly happy going shoeless and eating with my fingers.

There is no question that Africa affected more than just my childhood; and in the same way that a child's actions may bring its parents heartbreak, so too do I weep for Africa. I watch countries in the Orient, with no inherent advantages, rise and surpass Africa with unseemly ease. Its crises of drought and famine and plague are heightened only by the coups d'etat and corruption that accompany them. The Africans I know are beginning to blame a parasitic relationship between our two continents, saying, "If you always give to us, what reason do we have to work for ourselves?" Perhaps it is so, but I hate the idea of turning my back on Africa to find out.

We have a favorite family story. We made it a habit to go upcountry often, exploring and attending any number of local markets and festivities. Attending a yam festival, we were invited to eat with a group of chieftains who had converged for the event. With characteristic kindness, to impress their visitors and make them feel more at home, the villagers rolled out huge unopened barrels of what turned out to be complete sets of china and knives and forks, probably brought over by a colonist during Queen Victoria's time and never used. The chiefs, many of whom had never eaten with utensils before, were awkwardly applying themselves to cutting everything on their plates, including slices of bread. Being very small and no great whiz at utensils myself, I ate with my hand, African fashion. One chief smiled rather wistfully at my mother and said, "Isn't it nice to be a child and be able to eat that way?" It is even nicer to be a child and live that way. ■

A yam festival dinner party in Nuatja, Togo.

How to make the concepts of basic arithmetic come alive, and how to make the very lively social interaction of a public-school classroom a conceptual lesson, in one step: theater. Rachel LePell is producing director of The Connection Company, a Bay Area theater company which produces plays for teenagers.
—Sallie Tisdale

ACTING OUT

BY RACHELL LEPELL

Ralph Ryan

Middle-school children at Cupertino Summer Conservatory in math class.

The routine of a typical classroom is full of plot, characterization and conflict. But the teacher in this mathematics classroom takes this daily drama and converts it into a production, complete with scripts, lighting cues, audience, and performers.

The body of the play contains the kids pretending that they are whole numbers. It is crucial here to know that these particular students are grappling with basic arithmetic skills, such as addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication.

But more advanced study is equally rich in dramatic potential. The key is abstract and imaginative thinking. The kids here begin by using their entire bodies to shape the number they are playing. They lie on the floor, using their torsos, arms and legs to form the numeral. They can do this standing up, but the floor tends to provoke a more flexible portrayal. Then they "walk through" addition and multiplication by gathering in couples or larger groups. When the five and the seven get together, they must work together to form a twelve. When the two, three, and eight get together they must form a thirteen.

When acting out subtraction and division problems, the kids move from being one group to being single individuals or smaller groups. When the individual number divides itself, he/she must use fingers, toes, and other limbs to illustrate the concept. Factors and multiples become arms and legs. They personify the remainders from a long division problem by leaving out a peer. The leftover simply does not fit in — he/she is the remainder.

When student five plays the number five, he embodies Five. He must strive to think in five-word thoughts, move in five-step motions, speak in five-syllable or five-word phrases. He knows the fifth planet from the sun, the fifth letter of the alphabet, the fifth note on the "C" scale. He knows pentagons and pentameter verses. He wears the number five as a costume and makeup, both Arabic and Roman. He reports on the square root of five, five squared, and the five-card poker hand. The same is true for all single-digit number-characters. The double-digit number-characters have double duty — these are reserved for more advanced students.

All students have at least two roles. They play their numbers, interacting and forming relationships with other numbers. The lines they say while playing themselves are lines that they actually would say in those circumstances. The teacher scripts, or records, their actions and these are reflected in the new pages the teacher brings in once a week. The kids who continually disrupt, constantly cry for attention, are scripted as such; their roles, offstage and on, are merged. Those who play positive, supporting roles are those children who are generally supportive and positive. Each student fills a role both in the world of the classroom and the world of the play.

And when Jack suddenly blurts out, "Hey, why do I always have to be the one who interrupts, man? Why can't I be the one who solves the problem instead?" The teacher can reply, "Think about it, Jack."

And then, suddenly, five weeks into rehearsal, roles are switched for a few days. It is only an exercise in new perspectives. The goodie-goodie gets a chance to play the naughty-naughty and vice versa. They exchange places.

Rehearsals lead eventually to a performance for other classes. The students "act out" equations and the forms of a number; the class "acts out" as itself. ■

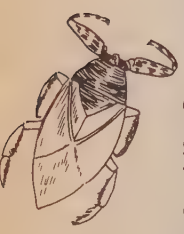
Mt. Wilson Quartzite, as seen high in Mt. Wilson from Saskatchewan Crossing. The massive quartzite is 165 m. thick and extremely resistant to erosion; it forms the pale cliff, which is overhanging in places.

Handbook of the Canadian Rockies

Modestly titled, ***Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*** *deserves to be known as* THE *handbook of the Canadian Rockies. In one fat but packable softcover edition, author Ben Gadd has combined all those handbooks on rocks-fish-bugs-trees-snakes-birds-flowers-etc. that you always wanted to take with you. This book's got everything you could ever want and then some — photos, maps, drawings, woodsy lore and tales and on and on, all written with bubbling and puckish wit.*

For anyone thinking of heading this way, this manual is a great investment. Info on hikes, alpine huts & hostels, cross-country trips, being prepared for the climate & camping, as well as a "must see" list, directory of topo maps and on and on and ON! It's the original "wonder" book.

—Andi Bartnek



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Giant water bug: *Lethocerus americanus*
(Hemiptera, family Belostomidae) June to September
Shallow, montane ponds and sloughs, often just under the surface among underwater vegetation. Largest water insect in the mountains (45-60 mm long), brown and flat, with thick front legs to seize prey up to the size of a small salamander. It grabs and stabs, thrusting a sharp beak into the victim and injecting it with anaesthetic saliva. It can do the same to your foot if you step on it while wading, the reason for its folk name: "toe-biter." The nymphs tend to eat each other, thus keeping the number of giant water bugs in any one pond fairly small. Good.

•

Sand Dunes in the Canadian Rockies?
Yes, there are dunes here. Perhaps the best-developed set is at Jasper Lake, 20 km east of Jasper townsite along Highway 16. Jasper Lake is the first large water body along the Athabasca River, so it receives a great deal of glacial sand and silt each year. It also has an interesting annual cycle, and the cycle produces the dunes.

In the fall and winter Jasper Lake is a barren sand flat 8 km long and 2 km wide. Every spring, usually in late May, it fills — although to a depth of less than a metre in most places (except along the Athabascan main channel, which lies near the north shore and is several metres deep). Thus, it is possible to wade far out into the lake before it gets even knee-deep. In late summer the lake shrinks again, exposing the silty, sandy floor to the westerly wind — constant and strong in this valley — which picks up the grains and carries them down the lake in dust storms.

Handbook of the Canadian Rockies
Ben Gadd
1986; 876 pp.
$19.95
postpaid from:
Corax Press
Box 1557
Jasper, Alberta T0E 1E0
Canada

Volunteer Vacations

Who would ever volunteer to actually work on a vacation? And maybe even pay for the privilege?

Lots of people. For a lot of reasons. A volunteer vacation can be a stint as a biologist's assistant tagging pelicans in Baja, or a counselor at a church camp. For some people this work is more gratifying than their daily job.

What do you get out of these vacations? 1) Rich cameraderie with interesting coworkers, 2) a chance to delve beyond superficial tourism into an intriguing place, 3) the satisfaction of doing visible good work, 4) relaxing exercise, and in some cases, 5) a tax deduction. All the excursions listed in this directory last six weeks or less.

—Kevin Kelly

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Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Ironbridge, Telford
Shropshire TF8 7AW, England
tel. Ironbridge (095245) 3522
Project location: Shropshire, England, three hours from London.
Project Types: Some volunteers man working exhibits, while others are involved in archaeology, research, cataloging, engineering, and conservation.
Project Costs: The museum has constructed a volunteer accommodation, which are dormitories with bunk beds, fully equipped kitchen, and laundry facilities. A small nightly fee is charged for using the dorms to help cover their operating costs. The museum has insurance to cover all volunteers, but volunteers are responsible for all transportation and food costs.

Project Dates: Volunteers are accepted year round for varying stays. . . .

Volunteer Vacations
Bill McMillon
1987; 173 pp.
$11.95
($13.45 postpaid) from:
Chicago Review Press
814 North Franklin
Chicago, IL 60610
or Whole Earth Access

A UREP volunteer studies a little blue penguin, the world's smallest penguin species, in Australia.

ON-BOARD COURIER TRAVEL

BY RICHARD MAHLER

IMAGINE MAKING A TRIP from the West Coast to Hong Kong and back for $300. How about a one-way flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu for $50? Or a $75 nonstop to London from New York? Consider trips between San Francisco and Manhattan for absolutely nothing.

We're talking about the ultimate in bargain-basement fares, available to the adventurous traveler willing to accept the minor discomforts of life as a freelance on-board air courier.

Taking such a flight is as easy as making a single phone call and driving to the airport. You'll take a regularly scheduled flight on a major airline, frequently boarding late at night and arriving the next morning. Your actual work will rarely involve anything more strenuous than accepting a business-size manila envelope or small package at the originating airport and handing it off to a representative at the baggage claim where you get off.

You're a mere cog in a jet-age delivery service used by blue-chip corporations (a movie studio, in the case of my first courier trip) and other heavyweights willing to pay top dollar for personally guaranteed overnight deliveries. They find on-board couriers are safer, quicker and often cheaper ways of sending precious items than by air-freight or package services such as Federal Express.

The typical courier packet is a batch of critically important documents bound for a lawyer's office, a film soundtrack destined for a movie studio, news photographs needed by a newspaper, or an application pushing an ironclad deadline.

Although it costs the passenger a pittance (or less), being a courier is not for everyone.

For clotheshorses who like to travel in style, the "carry-on luggage only" rules are probably too restrictive. The cargo hold baggage space assigned to the on-board courier is usually used to store hundreds of pounds of the paying client's material. Some services allow their fliers to check a suitcase if they're willing to pay an excess baggage fee.

Be prepared to make departure arrangements weeks or even months in advance, especially for overseas flights. If you want to leave right away, a courier company may agree to take you as a standby, but you must be ready to leave at virtually a moment's notice. I once touched down in New York City before 6 a.m., immediately arranged another courier flight to Washington, D.C. through the same company, and was on a shuttle to National from La Guardia by 8 a.m.

Unlike international flights, most domestic trips are only one-way. However, advance arrangements can often be made for the courier's return on a similar flight by the same company.

Don't forget that these are solo flights, limited to adults who are "neat in appearance." Couples flying the courier route generally try to get signed up to leave on sequential days, although the two may sometimes travel together on the same flight during a busy period.

There is no requirement that freelance couriers be bonded in advance. However, some firms require detailed information about employment and availability. All count on couriers who are extremely flexible and willing to accept last-minute changes. Travelers must reaffirm their flight commitment with the company several times in advance of departure and sign liability documents when they receive manifests for the cargo they are transporting. There are severe penalties if materials are lost or delayed by the courier.

If you're concerned about getting stranded or being asked to transport dubious material, don't worry. You'll only be penalized if you carelessly miss a flight. The major courier companies are legitimate, multimillion-dollar-a-year operations that make tidy profits helping America conduct the business of business. They wouldn't be around if they weren't reliable. ■

SERVICES USING FREELANCE ON-BOARD AIR COURIERS **(Prices and schedules subject to change)**

IBC — (213) 216-1261 or (800) 221-0417. From Los Angeles to Tokyo ($300 round trip). Hong Kong, Singapore (both $350 round trip) and Sydney ($550-$650 round trip). From New York to London and return only ($150 to $250 round trip). Prefer two months' notice.

GRAPH AIR FREIGHT — (213) 461-2719. Round trips between Los Angeles, Chicago ($100) and New York ($150). Payment is required ten days in advance and bookings at least four weeks ahead.

TNT SKYPAK — (213) 410-1419/Los Angeles; (415) 692-9600/San Francisco; (516) 338-4180/New York. No domestic flights. Round-trip international flights from San Francisco and New York. San Francisco to Hong Kong ($350), Sydney ($450) and London ($390); and from New York to various South American and European cities.

MIDNITE EXPRESS — (213) 857-1166. Daily nonstop from Los Angeles to London and return ($200-$250 one way, $400-$500 round trip). Stay as long as you wish. Prefer two months' notice.

NETWORK COURIER — (213) 410-7700, (800) 227-4218 or local listing. Ask for personnel. Domestic flights only, six days weekly between Los Angeles and New York; on standby basis between New York and Washington; on irregular basis to other U.S. cities. Must register in advance. No cost but some flights are one-way. Prefer six weeks' notice.

ONBOARD/IN FLIGHT COURIER INT'L. — (213) 642-7774/Los Angeles (9 a.m.-1 p.m. PST); (312) 929-7158/Chicago; (212) 431-1616/New York. From Los Angeles to New York, Chicago, Washington and return ($35-$80 one way). Los Angeles to Honolulu ($85 outbound; $100 return). Los Angeles to Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney ($250-$400). Chicago-London ($250-$350 round trip). New York-Puerto Rico, Milan, Rome, Amsterdam, Madrid, Rio de Janiero, Geneva, Frankfurt, Sydney, London, Hong Kong (prices vary). Six weeks' minimum notice. $50 annual fee, which begins with your first trip. Information: SASE to P. O. Box 92840, Los Angeles, CA 90009.

SECURICOR AIR COURIERS — (213) 641-6974. Los Angeles-London and return; London-Johannesburg or Hong Kong. Service Monday through Thursday, plus Saturday. $150 during off season, more in summer. Two months' notice.

ARCHER AIR COURIER SYSTEMS — (213) 484-5100/Los Angeles; (212) 431-1616/New York. Destinations from New York include Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Milan, Madrid, Paris, Hong Kong, Bermuda, London and Tel Aviv. Prices, schedules, terms vary. Office open 1-5 p.m. EST, Monday-Friday.

These companies only use employees as couriers:

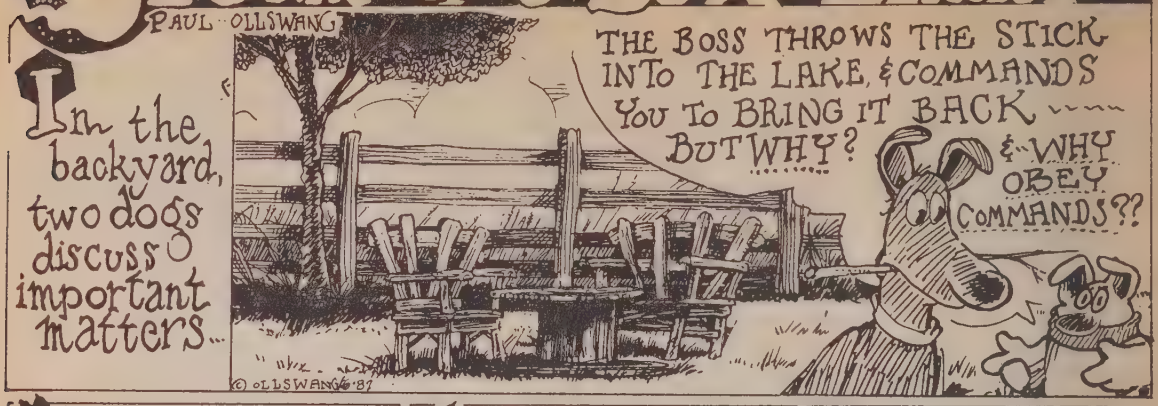
DHL — (213) 973-7300. Los Angeles-Houston, Honolulu.

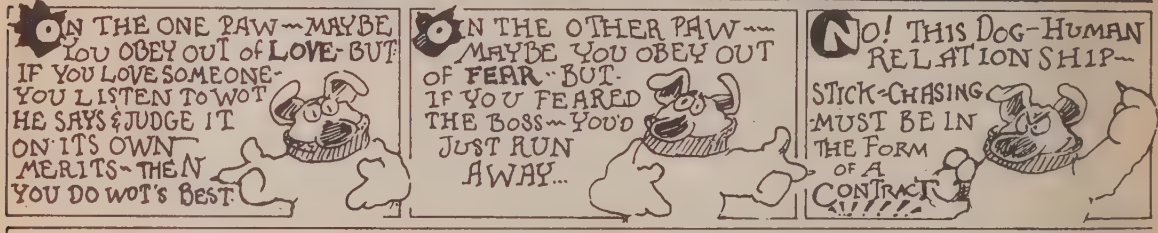
SKY COURIER NETWORK — (703) 620-5400 or (213) 629-0833. Mike Mostin interviews prospective full- or part-time couriers.

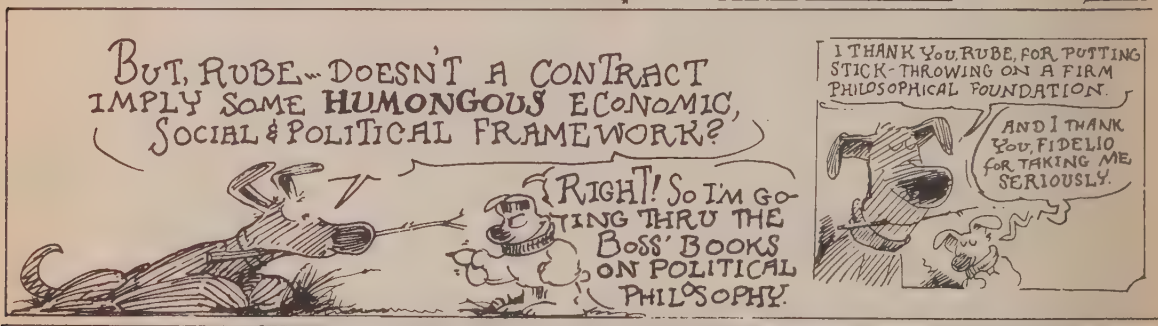
WORLD COURIER INC. — (213) 856-0231. Full-time couriers only.

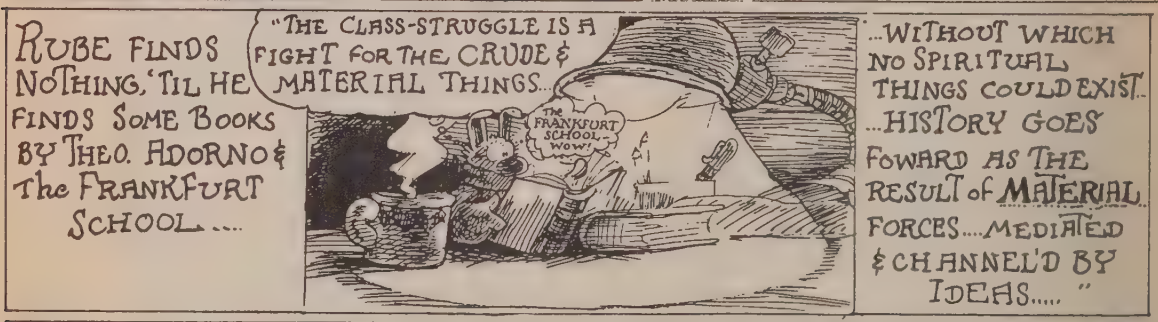
Dream of a Dog Scholar

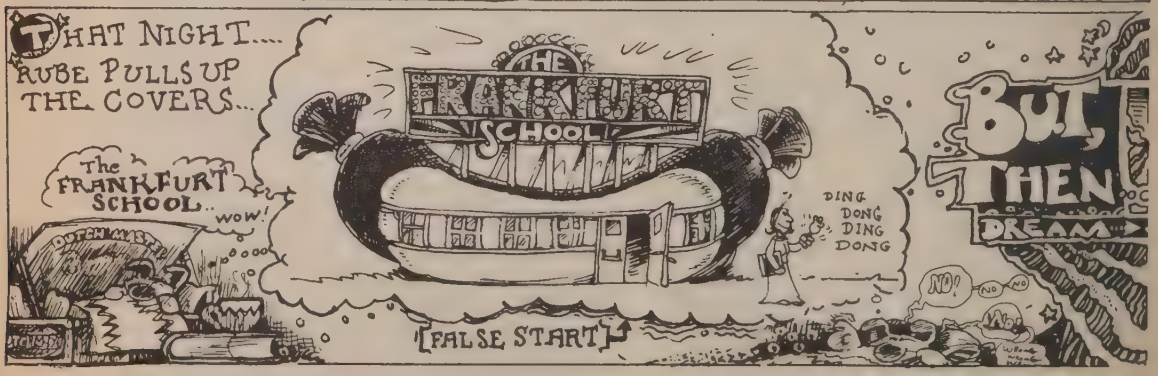
PAUL OLLSWANG


In the backyard, two dogs discuss important matters...
THE BOSS THROWS THE STICK INTO THE LAKE, & COMMANDS YOU TO BRING IT BACK..... BUT WHY?
& WHY OBEY COMMANDS??
© OLLSWANG '87


ON THE ONE PAW — MAYBE YOU OBEY OUT of LOVE - BUT IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE - YOU LISTEN TO WOT HE SAYS & JUDGE IT ON ITS OWN MERITS - THEN YOU DO WOT'S BEST.
ON THE OTHER PAW — MAYBE YOU OBEY OUT OF FEAR - BUT IF YOU FEARED THE BOSS — YOU'D JUST RUN AWAY...
NO! THIS DOG-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP — STICK-CHASING MUST BE IN THE FORM OF A CONTRACT!!!!!


BUT, RUBE — DOESN'T A CONTRACT IMPLY SOME HUMONGOUS ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & POLITICAL FRAMEWORK?
RIGHT! SO I'M GOING THRU THE BOSS' BOOKS ON POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.
I THANK YOU, RUBE, FOR PUTTING STICK-THROWING ON A FIRM PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION.
AND I THANK YOU, FIDELIO FOR TAKING ME SERIOUSLY.


RUBE FINDS NOTHING, 'TIL HE FINDS SOME BOOKS BY THEO. ADORNO & The FRANKFURT SCHOOL....
"THE CLASS-STRUGGLE IS A FIGHT FOR THE CRUDE & MATERIAL THINGS...
The FRANKFURT SCHOOL... WOW!
...WITHOUT WHICH NO SPIRITUAL THINGS COULD EXIST...
...HISTORY GOES FOWARD AS THE RESULT of MATERIAL FORCES....MEDIATED & CHANNEL'D BY IDEAS..... "



Paul Ollswang is an intense, bespectacled, suspendered fellow who talks a lot like the dogs in his cartoons. Herewith an abbreviated version of one chapter in his epic, for which he still dreams of a publisher. —*Sallie Tisdale*

GREETINGS, SCHOLAR REUBEN, YOU KNOW ME IN MY UNIVER-SITY COSTUME- BUT— NOW I REVEAL MYSELF AS—

WOW! ADORNO HIMSELF! WOTTA FIRST CLASS DREAM!

THESIS ANTITHESIS K-A-BLAM SYNTHESIS

CAPTAIN DIALEKTIX

GASP!

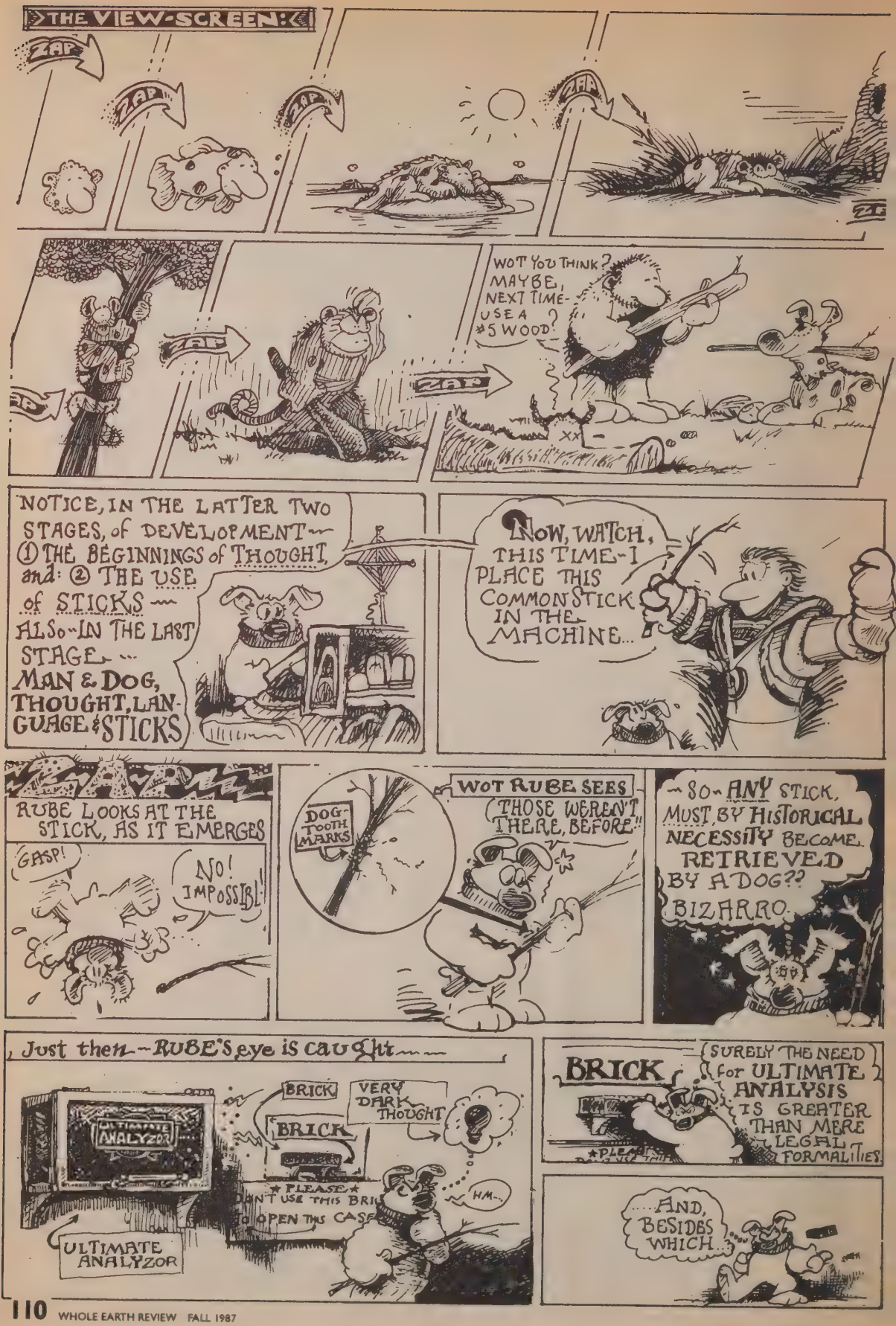
IT WAS IN MY MOUNTAIN-TOP LABORATORY, OVER-LOOKING FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN. THERE, I PERFECTED THIS WONDROUS MACHINE, THAT SITS HERE, HUMMING & GIVING OFF OZONE— THIS MIRACULOUS DEVICE TAKES THE SHEER FORCE of **HISTORICAL NECESSITY**, PROCESSES IT INTO A THIN COHERENT BEAM— AND SQUIRTS IT AT ANYTHING THAT WILL FIT, IN THAT ART-DECO FISH TANK IN THE CORNER—

SPUT SPUT SPUT SPUT SPUT SPUT

—THIS MEANS THAT WE CAN TAKE SOMETHING & SPEED UP ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT— WE CAN RECREATE HISTORY— OR— GO PAST IT...

I'LL DEMONSTRATE ON THIS VIAL of AMINO-ACIDS— the BUILDING BLOX of LIFE...

O.K.. HAVE A SEAT.... & WATCH THE VIEW-SCREEN...

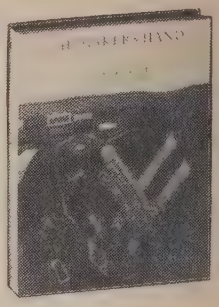

THE VIEW-SCREEN
ZAP
ZAP
ZAP
ZAP
ZAP
ZAP
WOT YOU THINK? MAYBE, NEXT TIME- USE A #5 WOOD?
NOTICE, IN THE LATTER TWO STAGES, of DEVELOPMENT — ① THE BEGINNINGS of THOUGHT, and: ② THE USE of STICKS — ALSO-IN THE LAST STAGE — MAN & DOG, THOUGHT, LANGUAGE & STICKS
NOW, WATCH, THIS TIME-I PLACE THIS COMMON STICK IN THE MACHINE...
RUBE LOOKS AT THE STICK, AS IT EMERGES
GASP!
NO! IMPOSSIBL!
DOG-TOOTH MARKS
WOT RUBE SEES
THOSE WEREN'T THERE, BEFORE"
-SO-ANY STICK, MUST, BY HISTORICAL NECESSITY BECOME RETRIEVED BY A DOG??
BIZARRO
Just then--RUBE'S eye is caught---
ULTIMATE ANALYZOR
BRICK
VERY DARK THOUGHT
BRICK
★PLEASE★ DON'T USE THIS BRIC TO OPEN THIS CASE
HM...
ULTIMATE ANALYZOR
BRICK
SURELY THE NEED for ULTIMATE ANALYSIS IS GREATER THAN MERE LEGAL FORMALITIES
.....AND, BESIDES WHICH...

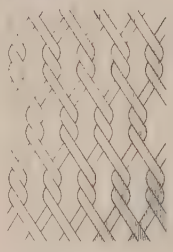
the Consolation of Philosophy
IF GOD IS DEAD, THEN NOTHING IS FORBIDDEN
CRASH!
TINKLE
HEH HEH HEH.
SCHOLAR RUBE! HAVE A CARE SIR!!!!!... THAT'S.... THAT'S THE ULTIMATE !!!!
AW, KEEP Y'R SHIRT, ON, CAP'N STAND BACK... THIS STICKS GOT T'BE BLASTED TO KINGDOM-COME & I'M THE DOG TO DO IT
RUBE THROWS THE STICK IN THE AIR, SQUEEZES THE TRIGGER ZAPO THE AIR CLEARS... AND RUBE SEES:
!O!NO!! A STICK MUST ULTIMATELY BECOME A LABRADOR, LIKE 'DEL, WITH A STICK IN HER MOUTH? NO!
Sigh... nothing makes sense.... MY COURSE IS CLEAR... I'VE GOT TO ZAP THE LABRADOR, THEN TURN THIS MONSTROUS DEVICE ON MYSELF; THUS ANALYZING MY OWN EXISTENCE TO KING SHIT HELL
ZAPOLA
THE AIR CLEARS AGAIN... THIS TIME RUBE LOOKS
IS THERE NO... NO... NO
...IS THERE NO END TOO INCREDIBLE FOR IDEAS? SHOULD THOUGHT BE ALLOWED EVERY LIBERTY?
THE DOG-SCHOLAR AWAKES:
DUTCH MASTER
PAUL OLLSWANG JULY 1987

The Maker's Hand

A labor of love. The author collects weaving of every imaginable kind and delights in deciphering its secrets. Socks from Afghanistan, fish floats from Norway, baskets from Greece, and arm bands from the Upper Amazon are among the more than 90 objects presented. Each is clearly photographed and accompanied by a line drawing of its often hidden weaving pattern. The author not only describes the objects' structure and function, but connects patterns and characteristics across continents, cultures, and time. Lovely. —Sallie Tisdale

The Maker's Hand
Peter Collingwood
1987; 160 pp.
$29.95
($32.95 postpaid) from:
International Press
306 N. Washington Ave.
Loveland, CO 80537
or Whole Earth Access





◄
Two Belts/Pakistan

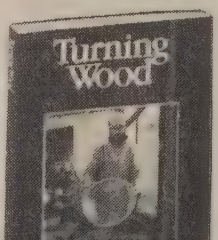
Sprang — a way of manipulating a set of taut threads — was once an important source of stretch fabric. Though it has now been eclipsed by knitting, it lingers on in isolated places and for specific uses.

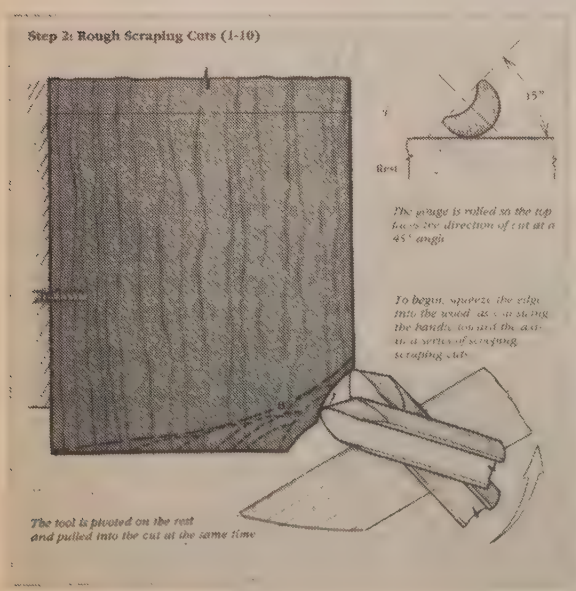
These interlinked belts from Pakistan are good examples. They are made on a circular warp, as the characteristic meeting line in the centre indicates. For the small toothed design between stripes in belt A, the warp has to have two colours alternately for eight ends. This bothersome detail is completely ignored in the warp making, with a consequent saving of time. But the first three rows of interlinking have been made with a double twist. As the drawing shows (read upwards) this neatly changes the colour sequence from 4 light, 4 dark to (dark, light) x 4, which is exactly what is wanted — a nice application of technical knowledge.

Turning Wood

There must be a zillion books out there on this subject, and it's easy to see why: for many (perhaps most) people, turning wood is fascinating. Even those who think working with one's hands is somehow a mark of the peasant seem to get off on it. Well, there's always room for one more book if it's a good one, and this one goes right to the top of the class. With most of the others, there is still a subtle mystery surrounding the exact meaning of terms and descriptions. Not here; the tiniest details are illustrated beyond question. Now if it was only available as a cassette . . . —J. Baldwin

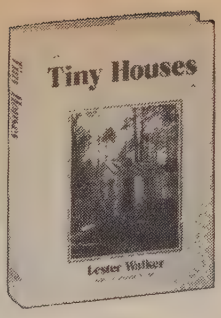
Turning Wood
Richard Raffan
1985; 166 pp.
$17.95
postpaid from:
The Taunton Press, Inc.
63 South Main Street
Box 355
Newtown, CT 06470
or Whole Earth Access




Step 2: Rough Scraping Cuts (1-10)
45°
Rest
The gouge is rolled so the top faces the direction of cut at a 45° angle
To begin, squeeze the edge into the wood as you swing the handle to and fro in a series of scraping scraping cuts
The tool is pivoted on the rest and pulled into the cut at the same time

To make the scraping cut using the lower edge of the gouge, roll the tool so the top faces in the direction of the cut at about 45°. Use a firm hand-over grip and move the tool around the curve with good body support. The handle will be pivoted to the right as it moves through the cut, ending up almost parallel to the axis of the wood.

1950s Ranch House

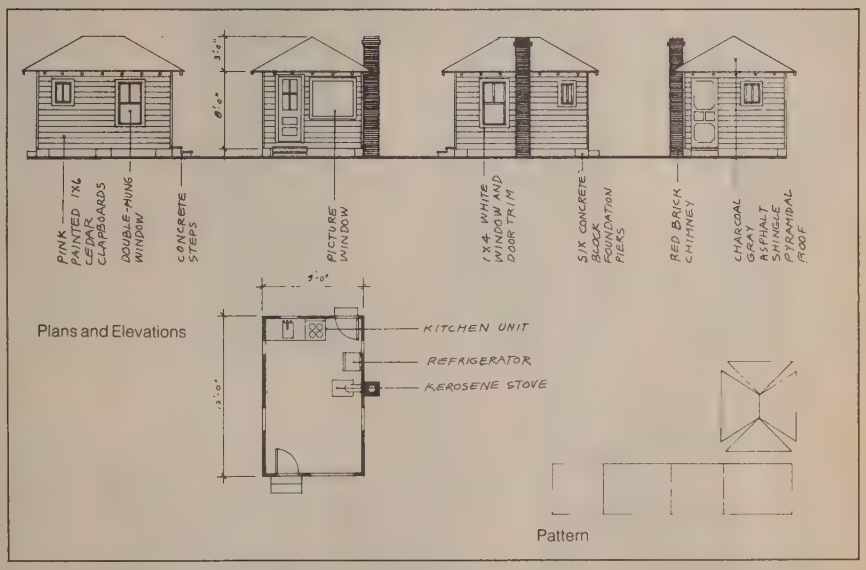


Tiny Houses
(or How to Get Away From It All)
Lester Walker
1987; 220 pp.
$19.95
($22.40 postpaid) from:
The Overlook Press
Lewis Hollow Road
Woodstock, NY 12498
or Whole Earth Access

Tiny Houses

Remember how silly a VW Beetle looked next to a Caddy about twenty years ago? Things have changed in the auto business, but a similar logic switch has yet to occur in the building business, where huge is still considered desirable, if not affordable. This nifty book sets you up for a big attitude change; the houses shown exhibit such variety and imagination that it's hard not to be charmed. Here's George Bernard Shaw's writing studio, mounted on a turntable so it can follow the sun. Here's Thoreau's cabin. Here's a two-person shelter-cart designed for the urban homeless, and the layout for the refugee shacks mass-produced for San Francisco earthquake victims. All the tiny houses are presented with text, photos and diagrams depicting layout and structure. I haven't been so stirred up by a book in years. Highly recommended.

—J. Baldwin



1950s Ranch House 12' x 9' 108 square feet
This classy little pink house with white trim sits just north of the Rappahannock River Bridge in a small development of tiny houses near Whitestone, Virginia. A 1960s Cadillac, completely dwarfing the house, is usually parked in the driveway.

Even though the house is tiny, it manages to exhibit most of the characteristics of a 1950s ranch house. On the exterior, first one sees the Cadillac, then the picture window, then the charcoal gray pyramidal roof and the pink clapboard siding, and on the interior, the drapes and the overstuffed furniture aimed at the TV. In fact, the lack of a dining table indicates that many TV dinners are probably consumed on the ever popular TV trays.

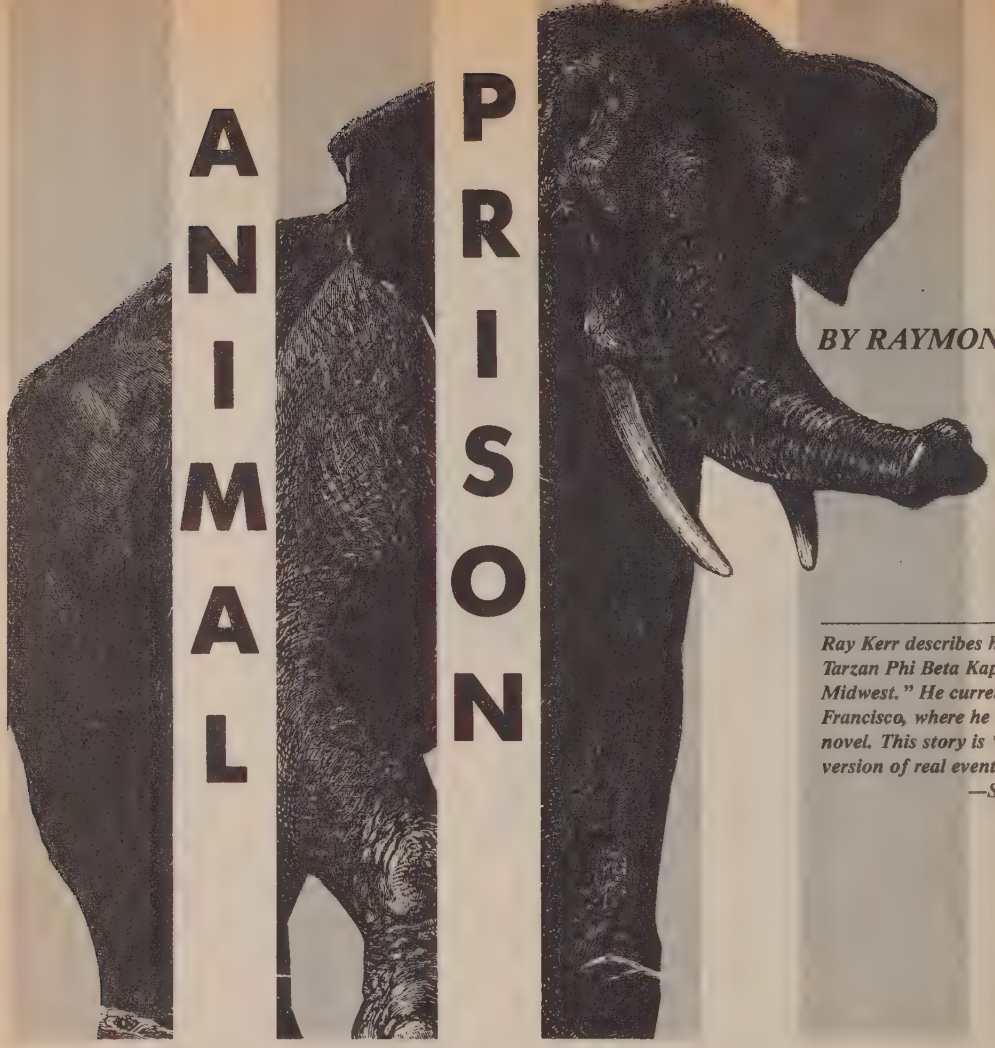
Walpole Woodworkers

*This outfit makes prefabricated, shippable tiny houses (one is shown above, in **Tiny Houses**). Their catalog is inspiring and instructive.*

—J. Baldwin

Walpole Woodworkers
Catalog
$1 from:
Walpole Woodworkers
767 East Street
Walpole, MA 02081

► **No. 1, 6' x 8'. Base price $1175.00.**



ANIMAL PRISON

BY RAYMOND KERR

Ray Kerr describes himself as "a Tarzan Phi Beta Kappa from the Midwest." He currently lives in San Francisco, where he is working on a novel. This story is "factoid," one version of real events.

—Sallie Tisdale

WE SHARED THE same birthday, my little brother Alex and me. We were both born on November fourth, Election Day, eight years apart. Alex was sixteen and had not uttered a single intelligible word in all his days. There were times when I almost understood.

I don't think anyone really *knew* what was wrong with Alex. Terms like "idiot savant" and "autistic" were bandied about. It seemed there were as many diagnoses as doctors.

Alex displayed a remarkable musical facility. He could ramble flawlessly through an intricate piano concerto, although his tinkerings generally ran more to the hypnotic repetitions of Philip Glass's *Einstein at the Beach* and silly little improvised plinks on the high keys that I dubbed "ants mating." But he never spoke.

Last week I phoned the Remedial Learning Center and asked the kind secretary to put Alex on the line. After a pause, two taps signalled on the receiver. Alex has a two-word phone vocabulary. One tap: No. Two taps: Yes.

I punched out a little tune on the telephone buttons to identify myself.

"Hey Alex, I'm dialing the matter translator beam for the zoo. Come on, let's get a new slant on life."

He tapped twice and the line disconnected.

I searched for his face through the glaze of dirty school windows. A river of kids spilled out the doors onto the cracked asphalt playground and I watched for him from behind the cyclone fence. I spotted him and waved, but he didn't see me. He was wearing a purple *Revenge of the Jedi* t-shirt. His flint-gray eyes were not intersecting with mine. His gaze was frequently non-intersecting.

We were much more synched when we were younger. I can remember hearing him call me in my head. I would hurry through breakfast and grab my fishing rod, saying, "Mom, I've got to go, Alex is calling me."

"Don't be absurd, Warren. The boy is mute."

But I would rush out the back door to find him waiting and ready to go to the pond. Freaked Mom out. She considered our rapport amazing. More incredible to me is that everybody speaks the same language, but nobody communicates.

Alex turned when he heard the cry of an ivory-billed woodpecker. I've been doing birdcalls since I was a kid. Alex recognized it right away. I especially get a kick out of letting loose with an eerie bird cry on the city buses and clamming up before anybody can tell where it came from.

Alex joined me outside the fence. As we crossed the street I said, "Did you watch both ways before the street crossed?" It often happened that my syntax slipped when I was with him.

We sank down the escalator into the maw of the MUNI underground at Church Street Station, opting for tubular transport to the zoo. The L-Taraval streetcar thrummed over the rails through the tunnel. Black glass reflected prying eyes, lost and absorbed in private prison worlds.

When the train stopped abruptly somewhere in the dark recesses of the tunnel and the lights went out, I felt a ripple of nausea and was seized by a doomed sensation. The air was stale and tired. There was no smoke, but the atmosphere was fairly cooking with sullen microwaves of exasperated fatigue. The space was dense and oppressive, as though we were all underwater on another planet.

The lights flicked back on, but we remained at a dead standstill in the tunnel. Then, just as we were both about to swoon from oxygen deprivation, the machinery started to hum and the streetcar lurched back on track. Boy, did we need prana, the life-energy of the breath. The L-Taraval coughed us out at West Portal Station and from there on it was an overland ride in the crystal sunlight. Blue sky, wispy clouds, and sea breezes to the zoo.

I looked over at Alex. He was so different from "normal" people with all their useless clamor. He was so clear. His mute vigilance spoke with an eloquence more powerful than words.

Alex flushed healthier with the prospect of blue and green ahead. He was extraordinarily sensitive to light radiations. It was uncanny. His pallid skin seemed to absorb light like film. He could take on colors like a chameleon. I remember him sitting beneath a tree when we were kids, fishing in the sun-spangled shade — the way he basked in cool, iridescent reflections from the lapping waters. The coruscating mirror of the lake would paint his face a magical silver-green. Under the harsh glare of fluorescents at the Remedial Learning Center, on the other hand, he just looked sickly pale.

As the streetcar sped us to the seaside zoo, seeing the blue-gray expanse of the Pacific brought a few lines of verse dancing into my reveries. I'd written "Oasis Mirage" to accompany a haunting melody that Alex composed spontaneously one afternoon at the piano:

"Water is a common bond;
Illusion's crystal palace lies
Reflected in a wavering pond.
Where merchants reign and
sense is scattered,
The heart's own pain is all
that matters.
In dreams we play.
In dreams we gather."

Blessed be the tender ritual of heads bowed to the Heavenly Provider of Wonder Bread and sandwich slices. Blessed be the apes' claptrap rigging of tires and chains and parachute straps hung from dead branches.

The sidewalk outside the zoo's fence was stencilled with the words: "ANIMAL PRISON."

We gravitated first to the cage where the spider monkeys were kept. Alex peered intently through the wire mesh. The languid spider monkeys seemed barely interested in hanging onto the overhead mesh with their long, slender fingers and non-opposable thumbs. They swung across the cage to beg us for food. The sign said: "DO NOT FEED."

We sat on a bench with a view of the outdoor theater of the orang. Bellysome baby ape was clapping and pissing freely for spectators, playing congas on Mama's tummy, and tumbling alive with agile searching toes and fingers in the wild, hooting air.

Alex followed the antics of baby Orang.

The orangs were attired in orange plastic collars and chewed-up construction caps. One orang shielded himself from the piercing rays of the July sun with a plastic garbage-can lid. The orangs are unique among the great apes in that they make foliage umbrellas to protect themselves from the rain. Quaint, I reflected, taking note of the "Vanishing Species" antelope-skull logo. I had a flash of the Zoo of Tomorrow: these same apes presented swinging off parachute straps. Feed your credit card into the display meter slot and a cunningly sophisticated holographic motion-picture simulation is animated, complete with digital sound and synthetic scents sprayed from atomizers, the voice of the safari guide on a static-fizzling tape beginning: "There go Eden's moon-faced orang-utans, running from the logger's saw . . ."

But for now they were real flesh-and-blood animals.

A family of American *Homo sapiens* sat down on the bench next to ours. Father, mother, son,

daughter. A well-groomed nuclear unit. They broke out the luncheon provisions. Waving off the exhaust fumes from the Zebra Express motor tour, Father Bear took the lead in bowing his head to give thanks to the Deity, before chowing down on white bread and bologna, Cheez-snacks, and carcinogenic diet soda pop. Daddy was a clean, crewcut Marine, evidently suffering from a dislocated shoulderblade, which swam all over his back like a bizarre clipped wingbone.

Alex sat up, alert and relaxed, adopting a posture of magnanimous equanimity, his fingers forming a gesture of reaching without grasping that resembled a young Tulku — a reincarnated Tibetan lama — bestowing a Universal Benediction: Blessed be the tender ritual of heads bowed to the Heavenly Provider of Wonder Bread and sandwich slices. Blessed be the apes' claptrap rigging of tires and chains and parachute straps hung from dead branches.

The gulf between Alex's sovereign idiot blessings and my own biting judgements was colossal. I couldn't help but think how our narrow notions of utility were undermining the very basis of our existence.

The Zebra Express rolled by, tour guide chronicling the destruction of habitats by man. I thought of our species' incursions into the fluid dynamism of the natural order, proceeding with accelerated disregard; the rain forests bulldozed — trees dying every day to satisfy somebody's idea of perfection. Erosion outpacing conservation, uniformity replacing diversity, and heedless expediency trashing the intricate web of life.

The mating call of a digital watch snapped me out of my reflections. The mounting cry of the monkeys short-circuited Alexander's lambent, prepossessing regard. The city's weekly Tuesday noon siren blew at the zoo. Apes wailed to each other from island cages with jazz cry hoots of bewilderment and terror.

The aviary flew up for grabs in the howling siren. I thought, "Your days are numbered, numb birds."

I followed Alexander's gaze through the bars. I sensed he had a spiritual affinity with the animal. Alex certainly shared the leopard's elusiveness.

When the siren died down, the little girl on the bench next to ours asked her father about the monkeys' hair-raising shrieks. "Are they talking to each other?"

"Of course they're talking to each other," I whispered aside to Alex. "The question is: Are they communicating?"

The *Homo sapiens* clan vacated the bench and headed for the aviary. The little boy pointed excitedly to a large cage.

"I saw one of those on a commercial!"

"Oh yes," said his mother, "that's the Fruit Loops bird."

The fearsome weeping of the siren had upset Alex. His eyes still burned with the terrified shriek of the monkeys. His eyes were crucibles of fire, pouring ablutions to Kali. The siren had triggered something in him. His features constricted with anxiety. His face grew tight with a pained expression of primitive distrust. All was not quite right in this sunny paradise. We both felt the strain of the strange.

We passed *Eliphas maximus's* pad. He looked sad. There was a construction crew working nearby. A welder, shielded behind the thick dark glass of his metal mask, wielded a brilliant blue-white star of acetylene fire. I wondered, "Who's gonna protect the elephant's eyes from the welder's torch?"

I read about the elephant's trumpeting and tummy rumble. The strong trunk was used to greet, tickle, scratch, rub, smell, and gently caress. Remarkable organ. Herds led by an old female. Very social. Will help a wounded comrade. Trunk up: I'm curious. Trunk down: I'm mad. Silence means danger.

A pride of lions — *Panthera leo* — draped their tawny hides over the warm rocks in their outdoor habitat.

Gazing across the pit to the lions, I had a weird, fugitive intimation, a curious feeling that Alex was about to say something. Of course, everyone around Alex had indulged that fantasy, thinking that he or she might be the one special person with just the right touch, the love, compassion, empathy, understanding, or whatever, to awaken Alexander into human speech. I too had entertained that fantasy at one time. But I had long since accepted that Alex would never speak. I even realized that I might be making a mess by endeavoring to remove his "flaw," and learned to appreciate the value of it. Alexander's silence taught me a great deal about body language. The words say one thing, the headlights say another.

Nonetheless, I couldn't shake this odd premonition.

When Alex saw Charley — Prince Charles, the Siberian white tiger — it was love at first sight. Instant empathy/attraction. Charley's outdoor cohabitant, Whiskers, a Bengal female, paced relentlessly over every last square inch of her prison. She was breathless, restless, mad: heart aflame with the implacable urge to break out. She leaped up the sheer wall of the pit with a resolute force that hushed the spectators into respectful silence. She jumped again and again, unable to accept defeat, but gravity reclaimed her in her impossible leaps.

Alex was agitated by the spectacle of Whiskers' frantic pacing. As he watched her fling herself against the walls of her prison, a disturbing somberness fell across his features. I steered him down the path that led to the green knoll habitat of the gentle gorilla, but Alex insisted upon going into the Cat House. It was nearly feeding time.

Alex was entranced with the snow leopard. The leopard remained poised in the frame between the indoor and the outdoor habitat. According to the sign, snow leopards are very secretive. This one was so secretive that he was still holding off on making an appearance, even though he'd already been captured. I followed Alexander's gaze through the bars. I sensed he had a spiritual affinity with the animal. Alex certainly shared the leopard's elusiveness. He too could fade into the background and go unnoticed, just as a snow leopard, cloaked in the white of winter, and standing still

on a mountain slope, would surely blend into invisibility.

Leo's door slid open and the King of the Jungle claimed his cage. Pacing hungrily, he ripped the air with a prodigious roar. Smoke from the guard's cigarette sliced through the bars, and it set the lions on edge. I couldn't hear myself think through the deafening roar. The sound vibrated our pantlegs and shook us to the core. I got into the spirit of the pandemonium by roaring with the lions for heart. I roared at the top of my lungs but was still drowned out in the echoing din.

The catkeeper made her rounds with a wheelbarrow full of red, raw fortified horsemeat. The bellowing of the beasts drew a crowd. The Cat House filled up quickly. The lurid appeal of predatory voyeurism was irresistible. I lost sight of Alex in the mob and was scared he might get hurt in the wild stampede.

Then the throng parted for a second, and I spotted Alex. He was holding onto the handrail, across from the cage of Prince Charles. Alex and the tiger were suspended, staring at each other, sharing an eerie, silent communion, partaking in a mutual stillness that looked almost like thought-exchange. For a moment, I had the strangest hallucination: it seemed like they had jumped into each other's skin and were staring back in amazement.

The white tiger's innocent savage

He braced his legs and pulled back hard on the rail, as if to bring it down, and when it didn't budge, he flung himself against the barrier over and over.

eyes stayed riveted to Alex, even as the catkeeper threw a juicy slab of meat into his cage. The Siberian white tiger made no move for the meat. It was unreal. I fought my way through a chaos of rude elbows, struggling to reestablish contact with Alex amid the unruly cacophony of this mob scene. I put my hand on Alex's shoulder and that broke the fixation. Prince Charles paced aggrieved out of the interruption. Alex's attention snapped loose to me for the briefest instant, then returned to the tiger. The tiger was frantic, and Alex's grip tightened to bone-white on the handrail. He began rocking back and forth against his grip. A most unsettling regressive display ensued. He seized the guardrail and rattled it with a shamanic rocking rhythm. It really frightened me. I flashed back to a time when Alex would beat his head against a wall, knocking himself senseless. I had to get him out of there. Fast.

And then he blew me away. He cried out with the first and only intelligible human utterance I've ever heard him speak.

"Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!" he chanted feverishly again and again, bouncing madly against the guardrail. He braced his legs and pulled back hard on the rail, as if to bring it down, and when it didn't budge, he flung himself against the barrier over and over.

"Freedom! Freedom! FREEDOM!"

The cop patrolling the Cat House raced over to Alex and ordered him to take his hands off the guardrail. I quickly interceded. I hugged Alex and he cried in my arms. When I touched him, it was like getting an electric shock that scrambled my thoughts and feelings beyond recognition. His despair scorched me. His pain exploded in my chest. I lost my bearings in his heaving sobs. All words of solace failed before I could utter a single syllable. We made our way home in stunned silence. I'd never felt so empty or so lost. I couldn't speak. I couldn't explain to my father. My vocabulary of feeling was not adequate to express the event.

Two days later, I landed a job as a trainee for a big computer firm. The day before I was to begin my full-time job, I paid a visit to the Remedial Learning Center. I knew I wouldn't have much time to take Alex to the beach or wherever any more, and that realization left me feeling punctured.

Alexander's eyes grazed mine and turned away. He sat down at the Learning Center's piano and immersed himself in a lyrical composition that I did not recognize. The crystal-perfect tones rang with a frightening fragility through the chasm between us. I chimed in with a medley of my favorite bird calls. Alex did not crack a smile. His face was a stony mask.

When the song died, we looked at each other in silence. I did not know what to say. ■

A Client Called Noah

Too many books about autistic children have been published, each telling the heart-wrenching tale of a child seemingly lost only to be rescued at last by that age-old remedy, love. And for all of the last 19 years, Josh Greenfeld, a novelist and screenwriter, has been keeping meticulous, painfully frank diaries about the life of his youngest son, Noah. Noah is severely brain-damaged and he is deeply loved, and he has not been cured.

***A Client Called Noah**, the third volume in Greenfeld's diaries, is too long, painfully detailed, embarrassingly intimate. Greenfeld spares nothing of his ambivalence, temper, self-pity, and death-wish impulses, and nothing of his abiding love and tenderness. It is the uncensored window into a family of gifted, creative people weighed down so heavily by one member that makes these such valuable books. The inevitable final chapter is institutionalization. An emotionally violent story, and a hearty antidote to easy answers.* —Sallie Tisdale

•

December 7, 1977
Many friends, I know, choose to forget the reality Foumi and I know firsthand. They like to think we somehow masochistically choose to have Noah at home out of whimsical or sentimental choice. They express concern about what keeping Noah at home does to Karl. But what would it be doing to Karl if he knew we allowed Noah to be put in a place where he would inevitably wind up even more disabled than he is now? Through a blinding. Or a maiming. Or a simple pharmaceutical error. I hate the pervasive fucking liberal Freudian mentality almost as much as I deplore the Uncle Tom's Cabin conditions of most institutions.

•

April 27, 1979
This morning Noah woke up with an "I-want-to-eat" whee, all in one long deci-scream. Communicating back to him, though, is still limited to verbs. Like a stroke victim. But now he can also lay four figures on the number 4, three on the number 3, and so on down. A great step

Making It Right

This rousing call for a reform of our criminal-justice system isn't especially comprehensive, but it does rub our noses in most of the real issues. The author's basic premise is that our prisons are overcrowded because we not only jail the violent criminals and habitual rip-offs (he calls them "Slicks"), but we jail society's losers ("Slobs") who haven't done much except screw up. Author (Judge) Dennis Challeen says we should force or otherwise encourage Slobs to make restitution to their victims as an alternative to jail. The examples are compelling, giving a feeling that this line of thought is probably right. Certainly it's better than what is now considered normal treatment, and certainly it's worth a try. —J. Baldwin

Making It Right
Dennis A. Challeen
1986; 137 pp.
$9.95
($11.40 postpaid) from:
Melius & Peterson
Publishing Corporation
P. O. Box 925
Aberdeen, SD
57402-0925

•

A thief breaks into Mr. Jones' home and steals his television. The television is sold to a fence and sometime later the thief is arrested while committing another burglary. The thief is a Slob so he confesses to all his crimes. The judge puts him in jail. The case is closed.

What has happened is the thief was made accountable to society . . . but not responsible. Mr. Jones is still out his television set and never sleeps the same again. In short the system failed to make the thief undo the wrong he has committed. Accountability but not responsibility.

Courts routinely make criminals accountable . . . but rarely responsible.

•

A Slick named George was an ex-convict who always managed to get out of prison early. He had a formula that always worked.

Says George: "When you get to prison, the first thing you do is become an outrageous jerk. Be violent, be crazy, be spooky, be kinky, threaten suicide, upset the whole place. Let them send you to the psychiatric ward, but whatever you do, make sure everyone knows about you right up to the warden. Then, you lock onto a do-gooder and bare your soul to him. Tell him how miserable you are and then slowly but surely let the do-gooder rehabilitate you. Whatever his pet program is, buy into it. If it is religion, buy into religion. If it's alcohol treatment, be an alcoholic and let him treat you. In the end, change to what they want. Show great progress and when you go before the parole board, it will be plain for everyone to see that you are rehabilitated and the do-gooder will verify it's true. Then, it's out the door and back to the streets."

Circus in a Suitcase

Ladies and gentlemen, step right up! I will bring you fame and fortune — in your neighborhood. I will give you the grand and ageless wisdom of how to interrupt busy lives with a little cheer. It's all revealed in this tiny book. In its few pages you'll find the essential techniques you need to begin a glamorous life of street performing. Learn how to amaze audiences with stilt walking, juggling, and acrobatics! Learn the secrets of busking — the ancient gypsy art of soliciting tips from bystanders! Teach your school kids self-confidence; train them to be clowns! Ladies and gentlemen, it's all yours for nine bucks! —Kevin Kelly

Circus in a Suitcase
Reg Bolton
1982; 94 pp.
$7.95
($8.95 postpaid) from:
New Plays
P. O. Box 273
Rowayton, CT 06853

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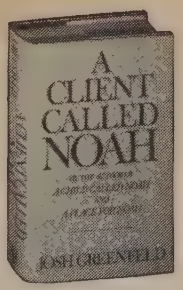
Street Circus and Busking
Two jugglers perform a fast, comic routine, and draw a sizeable circle of on-lookers. After about 5 minutes of action, without once acknowledging the audience, they begin to talk:

Bill: How are we doing?
Jim: I think they like it.
Bill: How will we know?
Jim: We'll see how much they give us.
Bill: When?
Jim: Now. (Stops juggling) I'll collect for you.

He moves around the audience, collecting donations, smiling a lot, and saying, "Isn't he good — for a beginner?" Then, "Okay, Bill, I'll take over, and we'll see what they think of me." Bill now "bottles" and thus they manage to milk the audience twice.

A Client Called Noah

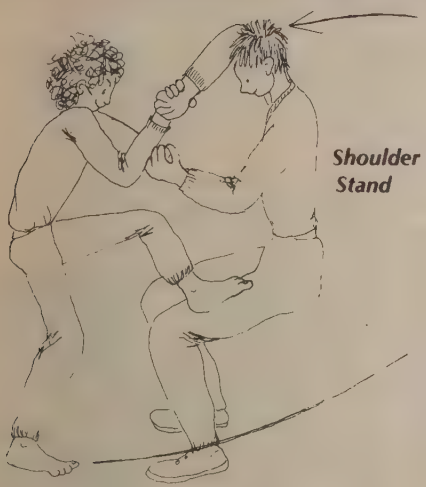
Josh Greenfeld
1986; 371 pp.
$18.95
($20.95 postpaid) from:
Henry Holt and Company
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10175
or Whole Earth Access



forward. But he has also developed the habit of having his evening bowel movements in two sittings about an hour apart. Which means we can no longer rest easy after one bowel movement; another might be coming. Last night my cousin, visiting town, was over for dinner and Noah showed great interest in his beard, playing with it as if it gave him the kind of sensual thrill a cat gives you when it stretches against your leg.

•

November 19, 1979
Foumi wasn't feeling well so I gave Noah breakfast, dressed him, and put him out to play in the backyard while I watched football with Karl. I called Noah in for lunch and fed him. Then we went for a long walk and a ride. In the afternoon, as Karl and I watched some more football, Noah chewed his shirt. Sunday: a blank of football games and a blur of warmth with the boys. My boys.



Shoulder Stand

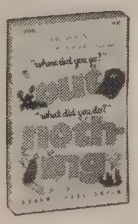
•

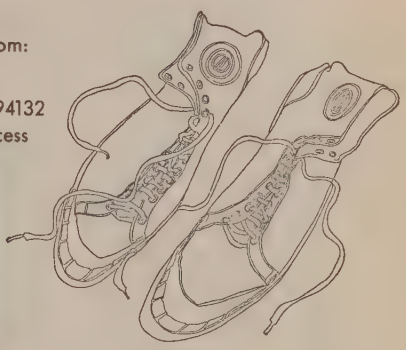
Pair Work: Shoulder Stand
This is very useful for pyramids, for short parades, and for fixing bunting on high poles. The best way up is the leg step.
• Grasp left hands.
• Grasp right hands, across palm, with thumbs down.
• You squat straight, and rider puts left foot on your upper thigh.
• She steps up to put her right foot on your right shoulder. As she leaves the ground, you move your arms to the right in a vertical plane across your head.
• As you push up with both hands, she puts her left foot on your left shoulder.
• One at a time, you release her hands, and hold calves, (fingers behind) so her shins rest on your head. She stands straight, only her knees slightly bent. The spotter must stand behind. If she falls, you *must* let go her legs, and she will either jump down forward, or slide down behind you, to land on her feet.

"Where Did You Go?" "Out." "What Did You Do?" "Nothing."

*Just possibly my favorite book in the whole world. I read this nugget for the first time when I was barely able to stumble over the words, and I've read it many times since. On the surface, **"Where Did You Go?"** is a straightforward memoir of one man's childhood. But author Robert Paul Smith knows so much about the minds of children that he wastes no time with parents and other adults. His memory of childhood is of children — himself, other children, games, toys, and* playing *— playing in all its earnestness, playing as a way of making sense of the world and oneself. It's laugh-out-loud, I-remember-that, don't-you-wish, hey-listen-to-this reading.* —*Sallie Tisdale*

"Where Did You Go?" . . .
Robert P. Smith
1983; 144 pp.
$5.95
($6.95 postpaid) from:
Lexikos Publishing
4079 19th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132
or Whole Earth Access





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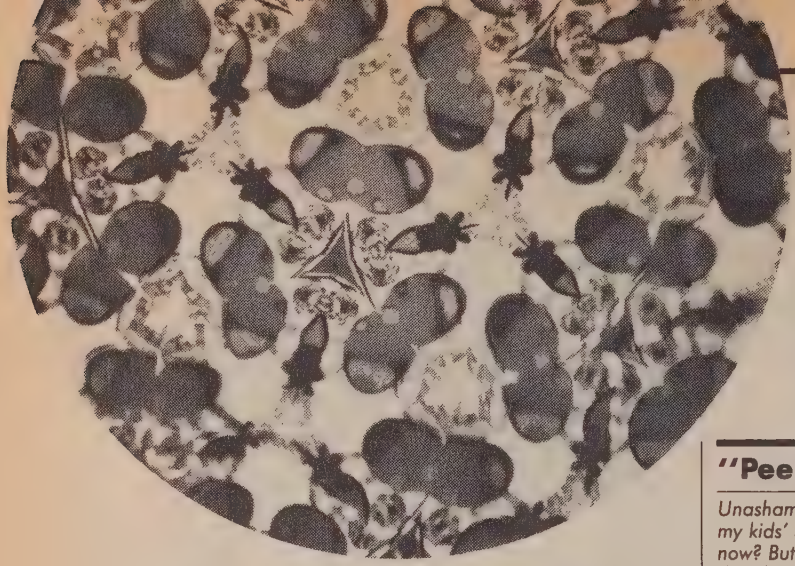
But then: facts, facts, facts. If you cut yourself in the web of skin between your thumb and forefinger, you die. That's it. No ifs or buts. Cut. Die. Let's get on to other things. If you eat sugar lumps, you get worms. If you cut a worm in half, he don't feel a thing, and you get two worms. Grasshoppers spit tobacco. Step on a crack, break your mother's back. Walk past a house with a quarantine sign, and don't hold your breath, and you get sick and die. Play with yourself too much, your brain gets soft. Cigarettes stunt your growth. Some people are double-jointed, and by that we didn't mean any jazz like very loose tendons or whatever the facts are. This guy had two joints where we had one. A Dodge (if your family happened to own a Dodge) was the best car in the whole world.

We cut our fingers in that web and didn't die, but our convictions didn't change. We ate sugar lumps, and I don't recall getting worms, but the fact was still there. We'd pass by the next day and both halves of the worm would be dead, our mother's back never broke, my sister had scarlet fever right in my own house and I must have breathed once or twice in all that time, none of our brains got *real* soft, and we really knew that what came out of the grasshopper was not tobacco juice. But facts were one thing, and beliefs were another.

■

It is summer, and there are the long evenings under the street lamps to talk to girls, to watch the big kids talking to girls, to tease the big kids talking to girls, to be hit by the big kids talking to girls, to play Red Rover, to sit on the porch steps and listen to your father tell Mister Fenyvessey what he thinks of the Republicans, to tell your best friend what your father told Mister Fenyvessey and what Mister Fenyvessey told your father, and what words your father used. It is summer and it is time to get a jelly glass and fill it full of lightning bugs and tie a piece of gauze over the top and take it to your room, and very late at night to see that your finger, where you touched the lightning bug, is glowing too.



Kaleido-Kit

Wow. Super kaleidoscopes. Soft cloth covers, front-surface mirrors, good clear focus, and a special bonus: take the plastic end off and rearrange the objects, add your own, change the color scheme. Try flowers, buttons, or rice kernels. The original kits are filled with multicolored beads and such unexpected things as window screen and paperclips. But the really special part of Kaleido-Kit is that you make it yourself (took me about 45 minutes, starting out stupid), and in the process get a painless lesson in optics, light, and color. Great gifts.
—Sallie Tisdale

Kaleido-Kit: $28 each; 2 for $50; $42 each for finished product. Colors: navy blue, burgundy, teal, paisley. Send check or money order. 3-4 weeks UPS delivery. American Visual Systems, P. O. Box 10855, Eugene, OR 97440.

Tenderfoot Clown Shoes

Alan Zerobnik makes comfortable, high-quality clown shoes. They fit well and last long — you can walk and run normally in them! They are used by the Ringling Bros. clown school, and Mr. Zerobnik will send you testimonials from Ringling Bros. declaring that his shoes are "unsurpassed by any we've ever seen." They weigh less than a work boot and more than a dress shoe. They are not cheap. He also custom-makes orthotic clown shoes, for the tenderfoot. *—Alicia Devora*

Tenderfoot Clown Shoes
Catalog

$2 from:
Tenderfoot
264 Atterberry Road
Sequoia, WA 98382

"Pee Wee's Playhouse"

Unashamedly bizarre. I started watching Pee Wee because my kids' uncontrollable laughter got me curious: What now? But I was hooked. This guy knows what makes children laugh, and if there's any memory of childhood in adults, what makes them laugh, too. No violence, no conflicts, no guns, no preaching, no sex. Just a decidedly weird house and cast of characters doing nothing more wacky than making ice cream soup or watching a travelogue of Hawaii. And hilarious. You have to see it to believe it. *—Sallie Tisdale*

"Pee Wee's Playhouse": CBS, 9 a.m. on Saturdays for the fall season.

Pacific Puzzle Company

Good, sturdy wooden puzzles ranging from the simple to the very difficult. Best United-States-map puzzle I've seen, for only $20 (a smaller version is available for $13).

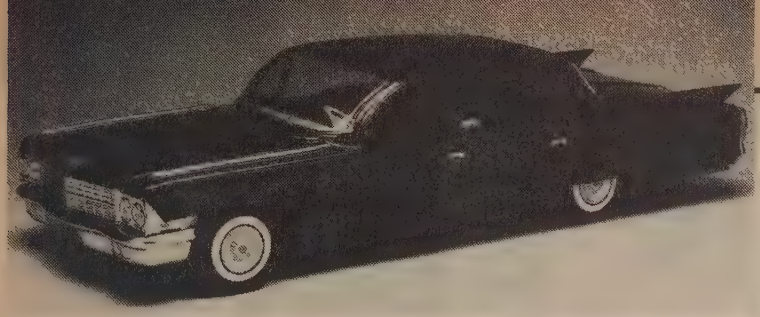
I prefer the map, alphabet, and number puzzles, but if abstraction's your ticket, check out the bugs, fishes, and birds. Not easy. *—Sallie Tisdale*

Pacific Puzzle Company: Information free from Ian Woofenden, 378 Guemes Island Road, Anacortes, WA 98221.

Things of Science

When I was a kid, my parents got me a subscription to a "science-project-of-the-month" club. I built crude radios, telescopes, electric motors, and learned a lot about science in the process. I loved it.

As far as I know, that outfit is out of business now, but Things of Science fills a similar niche. The monthly Things of Science kits focus on various themes: sea shells, sundials, optical illusions, herbs, seed growth, magnetism, aerodynamics, fossils. Little booklets introduce and explain the subjects, and always include a list of references for further reading. Instructions



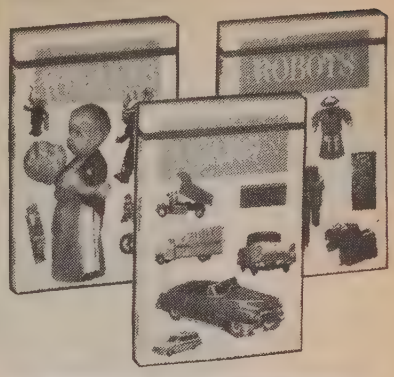
1960 Cadillac El Dorado, Yonezawa, 460 x 170 x 105

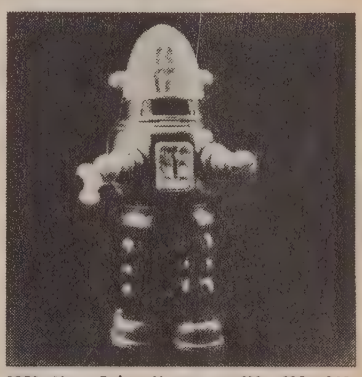
Tin Toy Dreams

Teruhisa is the owner of a sporting goods store in Japan. He loves Japanese tin-plate toys so much that he has collected and restored over 10,000 of them. These three reasonably priced books are probably the closest most of us will ever come to his million-dollar collection. Each volume devotes over 95 percent of its pages to exquisitely vivid, full-color photographs of individual toys. In some cases the colorfully illustrated original boxes in which the toys were packaged are also shown. Captions supply pertinent information like date, manufacturer, and dimensions.

Most of the toys in these volumes date from the '50s and '60s, though some (especially in ***Wind-Ups****) go back to the '20s and earlier. You might recognize some from your childhood — many were exported to the U.S. and elsewhere. I defy even the most disinterested reader not to marvel at the creativity, ingenuity, and stunning craftsmanship in these pages and to deny that tin-plate toymaking is the unrecognized popular art form of the twentieth century.* —Ted Schultz

Tin Toy Dreams: Cars, Robots, Wind-Ups
Teruhisa Kitahara, 1985
$8.95 each
($10.45 postpaid) from:
Chronicle Books
One Halladie Plaza,
Suite 806
San Francisco, CA 94102
or Whole Earth Access





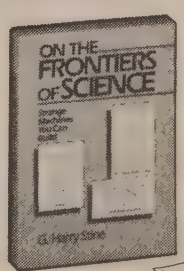
1950s Moon Robot, Yonezawa, 110 x 125 x 260.

► *Drunkard:* Spring mechanism. With a glass in one hand and a bottle in the other, the drunkard takes very shaky steps. His legs are made of wood, his body of celluloid, and his face may have been modeled after a Hollywood star of the 1930s. —*Windups*

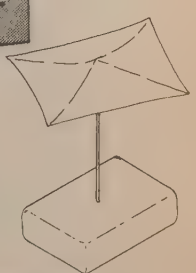
On the Frontiers of Science

"Strange Machines You Can Build" is the subtitle of this entertaining and infuriating book (to use the author's own description). Mr. Stine is a well-known physicist with impeccable academic and professional credentials — certainly not whom you'd expect to author a book of plans for such devices as dowsing rods, razor-sharpening pyramids, and an Energy Wheel moved by thoughts. He claims all eight of the machines worked for him. If they don't work for you, well, "not everyone can play the violin." Each plan is accompanied by speculation as to why the thing works, what to do if it doesn't, and lots of very explicit detail. The plans are so easy to use that there is just no excuse for a harrumph of dismissal without first trying it yourself. Heh heh. I love this sort of thing! —J. Baldwin
[Suggested by Sallie Tisdale]

On the Frontiers of Science
G. Harry Stine
1985; 111 pp.
$8.95
postpaid from:
Atheneum Publishing
c/o Macmillan Publishing
Order Dept.
Front and Brown Streets
Riverside, NJ 08075
or Whole Earth Access



Energy Wheel ►
Operating instructions: Find a quiet spot and place the energy wheel on a table. Make sure it's not in the draft of an air-conditioning unit, window, or heater. Avoid any air currents because they make the experiments more difficult.



Sit down at the table facing the energy wheel. Cup both hands around the wheel about a half inch away from it. Keep your hands steady by resting your elbows and forearms on the table top. Look at the unit and think of it revolving. At first it may wobble. It may revolve first in one direction, then stop and start rotating in the opposite direction. Concentrate on movement in one direction. . . .

If there is any question in your mind as to whether or not air currents are causing it to rotate, place an inverted glass drinking tumbler over it. Cup your hands around the glass and make it rotate in the enclosed space.

and raw materials for hands-on experiments are also provided. The "Sea Shells" kit, for example, includes eight shells from two classes of mollusks. The "Sundials" kit supplies the parts for assembling a working sundial from straws, wire, string, and cardboard. The experiments are interesting enough to inspire me, though the suggested age range for subscribers is 10 to 16.

My lifelong sense of wonder for the natural world began with children's science books and kits like these.
—Ted Schultz

Things of Science: $20/year or $37/2-year subscription from Things of Science, 819 Washington Crossing Road, Newtown, PA 18940-2703.

C'mon 'n' Play!

BY BRYCE
THE TOYMAKER
WITH MARGARET MUIR

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, 1972

THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I'm standing on the corner of Thayer and Angell streets, up the hill by the college, a boxful of toys spread along the top of a wall.

"Wooden toys!" I'm shouting. "C'mon and play!" I feel sort of naked, like an exhibitionist, showing off my playthings, smiling like an idiot. OK, here come some kids.

"Hey guys, c'mon and play." I've got some kid toys in the kit, good masses-in-motion stuff.

"Can you do this?" I ask, flicking my wrist so a small tethered ball jumps in and out of a hoop.

"Neat! Let me try." There. I've snagged some kids. Now I'm not some weirdo soliciting on a corner. Now this spot is a playground.

"So what's this, mister?" This kid's got an *oh-yeah-show-me* kind of look. He's pointing at a carved lizard about three inches long. Its head and tail are cantilevered over short legs.

"That's a LEAPING LIZARD," I tell him, as I smack down on the end of its tail with the edge of my hand. The lizard jumps up in the air about a foot, somersaults, and lands on its feet.

"All right!" The kids applaud. Passersby give us curious glances.

"Join the fun!" I beckon. "There's something here for everyone." A guy in a tweed jacket slows to check us out.

"Such as?" he asks. Leather elbow patches, probably Brown faculty.

"How about this item, professor?" I hand him a wooden leaf, hinged to a board.

"What is it?" He gives me a quizzical look. I shrug.

"Play with it. See what it does." He shakes the board and the leaf turns over.

"There. You've TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF." He groans.

"Yeah, and this is a LEAPING LIZARD," the Missouri kid chimes in. He's caught the spirit.

"What's this then?" the professor asks, picking up a carved man about four inches tall, wearing what looks to be a red beanie. The hat jiggles.

"No." He gestures me to wait. "Let me guess." He turns the man upside down and the hat slides out of a hole. It is actually a sausage-shaped object.

"Bologna," he pronounces. "FULL OF BOLOGNA!" I nod sagaciously. Now I'm whirling another device over his head, enticing others to join us.

"What's that thing?" A lady with a twinkle asks.

"This?" I look at it uncertainly. "Perhaps this gentleman can tell us." The professor looks up from his musing.

"Hmmm." He squints thoughtfully. The kids giggle. The gizmo in question has what looks like a six-inch baseball bat set at ninety degrees to the handle. As I rotate my wrist, the bat swings round in a circle. Once every revolution the bat hits a small bell hanging from a bracket.

"Ding. Ding. Ding." I'm cranking and grinning, starting to relax. The crowd is thickening up nicely.

"My God!" blurts the professor. "It's a DINGBAT!" Everyone laughs.

Laughter is infectious. Get a few folks laughing on a sunny corner, and you'll soon draw a crowd.

Some folks never grow up. But Bryce and Margaret Muir, whose cooperative by-line last appeared under "A Tale of Ice and Wild Dogs of the Sea" (WER #47), do get better. This breezy, slightly lurid autobiography of toymaking brings us to the present: Bryce is a "full-time toymaker and sometime scribbler, Margaret a high school teacher and educational consultant." They live in Bowdoinham, Maine. Bryce points out: "There is only one Bowdoinham in all the world." —*Sallie Tisdale*

The gentle jostling along my wall has driven me to the periphery. The kids are explaining things to newcomers. A bystander beards me.

"Got any pigs?"

"You mean do I go HOGWILD?" He smiles.

"Actually," he nods toward the crowd, "I was thinking of HOGWASH." I stick my tongue out at him.

"As it happens," I squeeze through the press and come out waving a toy, "there's this." I hand it to him. Sitting on a track is a wheeled pig with tusks. At the end of the track is a wall.

"I don't get it," he says.

"Tip it," I suggest. He does so. The pig races down the track and slams into the wall.

"It's a CRASHING BOAR," I whisper.

"Oh, Jesus. I've got to have it. How much?"

"Eight bucks?"

"Done." He digs for his wallet. Onlookers are rubbernecking. *What did we miss?*

"It's a CRASHING BOAR," the new owner proudly demonstrates, to a chorus of groans.

I've been scanning the mob. Today's circus must look especially innocent. There are two little old ladies watching from the outskirts. Old ladies are the most timid about street peddlers.

"May I show you something, ladies?" I ask politely.

"Why, yes. Is that a giraffe I see there?"

"Sure is." I dodge into the fray. "Excuse me, gang. These ladies would like to play with a giraffe." The old girls are grinning when I hand it to them.

"Oh. He's lovely." The lady holding it swings its legs. "Look, he runs."

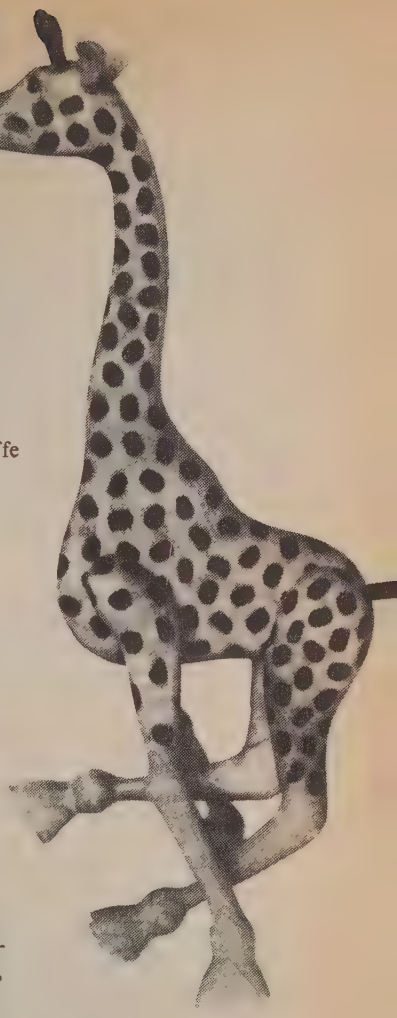
"Yes, but he's young, and he tends to fall down," I point out. Now the other lady is stroking the giraffe's neck.

"Could I take him home with me?"

"Only if you give him a good home," I chaffer.

"Oh, yes. I promise." She tells me her name is Mrs. Conant, and she lives alone, but now she will have a giraffe for company.

What can I say? I played with wood in my shop, trying to capture the lope of a giraffe, and this lady has brought my work to life in a very different way.



OUR CAPACITY to project private material onto a toy in our hands continues to amaze me. It starts in infancy. A child shakes a rattle, learns what it does and how to do it, then *plays* at it, for the mere pleasure of mastery. Jean Piaget, the Swiss child psychologist, tells us the child acquires thereby "a feeling of virtuosity or power." In the world of child's play, ego dominates the universe, and it feels good. Thus empowered, the child begins to transform things in this play universe. A block of wood becomes a truck. "VAROOM!" We encourage this symbolic play, this free manipulation of objects and ideas, by giving the child a toy truck. What magic! The child knows that anything can be a truck in make-believe, but here is a little bit of pretend that looks just like the real thing. By this act of reduction we conspire with the child's make-believe. We put the world in her hands. ►

"His Bach is worse than his bite."

But a child's life is not all playtime. Her ego doesn't rule the real world. We don't lose the gift of make-believe as adults. Not only do we continue to symbolically manipulate the universe in the mind's eye, we also continue to invest objects with symbolic identities. It still startles me, though, when someone takes up a carving of mine and it becomes a numinous symbol in their world. I merely made a plaything, but Mrs. Conant found a friend.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, 1974

Another sunny day on the corner. I've been working this pitch for three years now, whenever I have a boxful. It takes a critical mass of toys to get people playing. Thirty is my ambition: not too much to lug, enough to make a show, you can sell some without looking empty, and that's about as many toys as I can conjure up in a good week. A fair amount of my production is orders, or targeted shots. I'm driving the pig man about nuts. He can't resist a pig pun, and has taken to slipping by across the street lest I empty his pockets. Today it's A PIG IN A POKE: being a fist with extended index finger on a long arm. In the hand is a piglet. I'll spot him today.

Other folk have other fancies. I've got a new magic wand for Karl, our resident occultist. To open locks, this time: it looks like an elegant key. Soliciting make-believe from passing strangers rarely stops being fun. Oh oh, here comes the lovely Lucy. Did I say soliciting? Lucy fancies herself SENSUOUS ROMANCE INCARNATE. She's fun to play with. She never visits when there's a crowd. Our consultations must be private.

"You happy today, Lucy?"

"Ohhh." A lilting sigh. "I don't know." She idly pokes at an EGG ON YOUR FACE, and the egg rolls around on the face.

"I've got something in the box for you," I tell her. Her eyes play hide-and-seek. Now *I'm* teasing, pretending interest in a NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE.

"Will you show me?" she whispers. Silently I slide back the wooden top of the toybox, and bring out a cherry mermaid.

"O my!" Lucy gushes. She fondles the oiled wood. "But I don't have any money today." Her eyelids flutter.

And so it goes. I'll keep the lovely's mermaid for show, until some loverboy wants to charm her. Meanwhile we both had a bit of melodramatic fun.

There are all sorts of players. The street people have dramatic flair. Jimmy Flowers always makes a great scene about me stealing his pitch. I try to have a wooden flower to punctuate these encounters with. Musicians know all about play, and enjoy trading fantasies. I usually have a noisemaker as a come-on, and the musicians turn them into instruments: cook up a tune. Today's noise is a QUACK. It's a duck with a stethoscope who squawks when you blow up his tail.

Other passersby are playing at being serious. The BIG DEALS like to haggle. If I see them coming, my asking price doubles.

"What do you mean? Five bucks!" Outraged shock. "I'll give you a buck and a half."

"Four dollars. Where else you gonna get one?" These guys travel in groups and perform for each other.

"I'll pay two, and it's too much."

"Wait a minute now. Maybe I have a better toy for you." I dig in the box. "Here." I hand him a carved ice skate.

"What's this?" He asks. I wink at his buddies.

"A CHEAP SKATE. One buck."

Then there are the moralists. My favorite is the Christian Brother who herds a flock of schoolchildren past me. His game is HOLIER-THAN-THOU.

Cat Scan

"Children! Don't pay any attention to that filthy hippie. Come, children." He's a wonderful source of inspiration. I made a bent-over nun who gets booted by a great foot and falls on her face. I was ready the next time Brother Holy came by.

"Look, kids! KICK THE HABIT!" I've been carting around a little monk in a cage (BE YOUR BROTHER'S KEEPER) for weeks, waiting for the flock, but I think he's changed their route.

"There you are!" That booming voice has to be Stanley Blitz. "I've been looking for you all week."

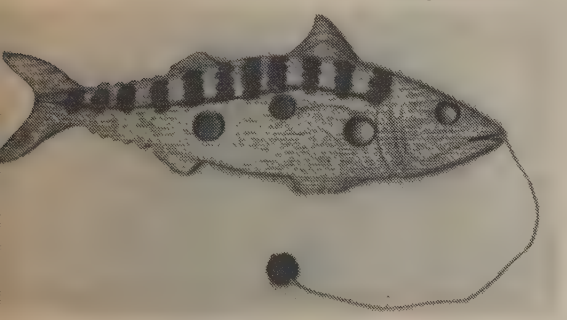
"Hi Mr. Blitz. Got some new ones?" S. Blitz has a new young wife, and their joy is insulting each other. He brings me lists of rude puns, and usually convinces me to make one.

"Yeah. Some good ones, but *this* I gotta have." He's made a sketch. It's a donkey in an elevator.

"What's that?" I puzzle.

"UP YOUR ASS!" he booms.

Holy Mackerel



Name That Toy

I DIDN'T SET OUT to make wooden puns. My first toys were the usual: trucks and trains and planes, puzzles and blocks, pull-toys and pushtoys, yo-yo's and hoop-tosses, little play figures (Goldilocks and the Three Bears, with a table and bowls). But my own make-believe kept injecting adult material into the work. Then these street games of "what if?" showed me other worlds of adult pretend.

Designing playthings is a game everyone is expert at. Engineers from the college, full of mechanical whimsy, stopped to play. So I started tinkering with devices — cams, linkages, geartrains — breaking the toys down into mechanical elements, then constructing new combinations. Other people began to tell me what their dream toy might be. Just in fun. It could be a small scene or figure out of a private tale: a little floating island with a cottage and trees and a boat, for musing in the bath, perhaps; or a pipe, where the bowl is a campfire surrounded by a ring of elves. Alfresco players offered me bits and pieces of their imaginings, and I cobbled them together in wooden combinations. This corner game is full of wordplay, so it was inevitable that the words ended up in the toys.

Taking up something of the real world, abstracting it into a word, is the trick of language. By naming it we raise it to the level of spirit. That's what imagination is: the transformation of reality into images we can manipulate in our minds. A very useful sort of make-believe. We can play "what if?" with abstractions without getting tangled in the limits of material reality.

Heady stuff for a toymaker. Tinkering with the bits and pieces, I get it backward, of course. I take an abstract image, realize it in wood, and it turns into a bad joke. MAKING ENDS MEET becomes a bent-over couple who bump backsides. Turning the trick of language inside-out, realizing our verbal images, makes us laugh — and a few bucks for the gypsy toymaker.

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, 1977

I'm futzing in the toyshop with Seth, our one-year-old, playing at my feet. Every toyshop should have a resident free spirit. In theory I'm constructing a CUTTING RED TAPE for our local MP. Actually I'm watching an uninhibited toy designer at work. Seth has taken a wooden dumptruck and is VAROOMing it around. Already I've added big knobbly wheels to the truck, in my head, so the clatter will echo Seth's VAROOMs. Now he upends the truck and begins to plow a pile of blocks. Eureka: a dump body which flips over the cab to become a plow and front-end loader!

It's OK for kids to do this stuff, but grown-ups? Last month I had a show at the provincial art gallery. The curator wanted "kids' toys," and I devised 50 good-sized playthings, enough to turn a gallery space into a playroom. When I was setting up, Seth was playing with some of the toys. A guard came up and said, "No, no, little boy. You mustn't touch." Seth looked puzzled. I had to explain that these were really Seth's toys, and we wanted everyone to play with them. The next time I saw that guard, he was down on his knees with a mob of kids around

him. He was showing them two dalmatians driving a fire engine.

The local ART critic was outraged. This sort of thing has no place in an ART gallery. The ART game has very strict rules. When adults play with abstract visual concepts and images, it must be in a hushed space with solemn ritual: cucumber sandwiches and the incantation of critics.

BOWDOINHAM, MAINE, 1987

Still making toys. Virtually all my playthings are commission pieces now. The toy design game is a ritual dialogue. Someone will contact me and we verbally play with images and concepts. As we bat an idea back and forth, the shape of the message begins to clarify. At a certain instant we both *see* it. Then it's my job to realize our play image.

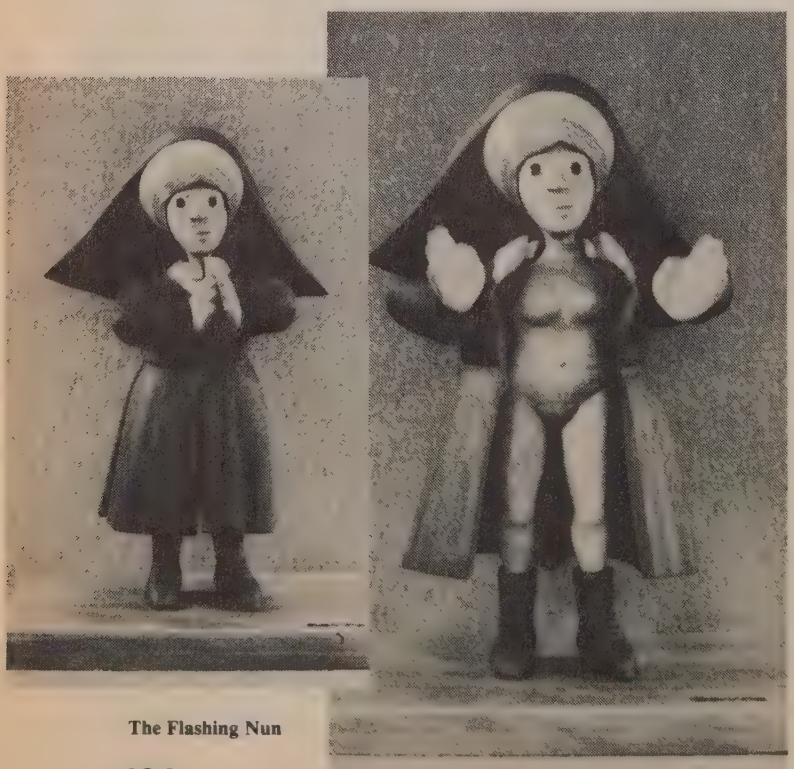
Many players come back for more fun. One couple bought symbolic toys for each other during their courtship. For a wedding present for him, she had me caricature her early self. She had been a nun. I carved a very devout Sister in wimple and habit, with her hands together in prayer. When you pulled a string in back, she threw open the habit and was stark naked, except for rather kinky boots. Her tickled husband, a lawyer, was not content to let her have the last laugh. He soon commissioned a barrister in robes, showing off his (legal) briefs.

Last Christmas these playful lovers envisioned an image of themselves on their dream boat. The barrister has had a lifelong ambition to own a *Concordia* yawl (a line of yachts begun with the *Java* fifty years ago). They decided on THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT. I made a pea-green *Concordia* on which a very stuffy owl, in a loud vest, is strumming a small guitar. He makes furtive glances at Ms. Puss. She's in a decollete gown, and idly licks her breasts while giving *him* the eye. The whole thing works by twitching the pussycat's tail. White magic is not dead. The owl called excitedly in March. He'd just found an old painting that he owned was worth a lot of money. He sold the painting and immediately bought *Java,* which was up for sale. SHAZAM!

But is it still play? One of our nephews came to visit last summer. With the devastating frankness of a 17-year-old he said, "Uncle Bryce, your toys aren't as playful as they used to be. I mean they're beautiful and clever and all, but they're not as much fun."

He's quite right in one sense. The crude carvings and primitive devices he remembers from the early seventies gave the imagination more leeway. You *had* to imagine what the object was. Just as a block of wood can be any truck in child's play, so can the crudest image symbolize the heart's desire. My caricatures now look more like the people and things they symbolize. But there is more play within each piece, I hope. My toolkit of whimsical details is immeasurably bigger, and spills over into the work. The arch of an eyebrow, or a back, is imagery at play. The finished toy may embody a private joke, which is less accessible than a broad pun, but it's still just in fun. When a piece works, it still carries you away to make-believe. And the process of composing the piece is still a matter of playful tinkering with bits and pieces in the hand, and in the mind's eye. The game's the same, it's just that the product has grown up.

The child's play in each of us matures, turns to subtle details: a wink and a nod. We learn to perform adult roles without giggling, and call our playfulness "art," or "design," or "invention," or "creative thought." There is certainly a danger of smothering play in a rigmarole of style, or formal limits. Too many rules can crush the joy in any game. When we are adamant that there is only one way to do something, one way to think, we've lost our adaptibility. That's where play saves us. There's always a child at our knee asking the imponderable question, an Einstein out there juggling the basic concepts, or a child's voice in us whispering "what is it?" ■



The Flashing Nun

BOYS & TOYS

BY TED SCHULTZ

PHOTOS BY TEENA ROSEN

Toys he can only dream about: "I had to stop building the big ones," says Paul Mavrides. "It got more and more difficult to maneuver around the apartment."

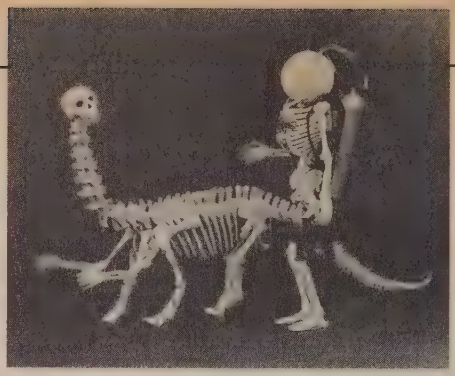
IN THE GLORY DAYS OF youth, all of life is a grand adventure of limitless possibilities. Excitement and enthusiasm launch our every morning; wonder and exploration propel us through the day. We are at one with the Original Fascination.

But, from the beginning, the Original Fascination is opposed by the forces of Grim Practicality. Parents, teachers, and older kids take sinister, balloon-popping delight in reminding us that our fantasies are not "real," that we must lower our expectations to match the dreary adult world for which we are destined. Oh, sure, at first daydreams, reveries, and games of "pretend" are tolerated, perhaps even encouraged. But as the years progress, they are slowly and inexorably replaced by Grim Practicalities. Except for the deep longing known as nostalgia, the potent accoutrements of the Original Fascination slip from our lives, forgotten by most adults: cartoons, comic books, and . . . *toys!*

Toys! Dream images made real, surreal subvertors of Grim Practicality, totems of the Original Fascination. *Toys!* External foci of the great inner forces of imagination and creativity. *Toys!* Heartstrong with their thrill in the midst of childhood, I swore a secret, solemn oath to myself: *I would not forget.* At that moment I pledged allegiance to the strongest force I knew, and it has never let me down.

Today I sit surrounded by toys. Some of them have accompanied me through thirty years and more. Others I've acquired here and there, mostly at garage sales and flea markets. I'm especially fond of spacemen, spaceships, robots, dinosaurs, monsters, and flying saucers. These little images provide instant re-contact with my ally, the Original Fascination. I suppose to some people (including most "true collectors," who've turned toy collecting into a business) my assemblage is

Ted Schultz, semi-famous for his recent special issue on "The Fringes of Reason" (WER #52), here defends his — and others' — preoccupation with the objects of childhood. —Sallie Tisdale



just a pile of cheap plastic junk. They're wrong. Of course, my adult aesthetic appreciates fine craftsmanship and notices the flaws in toys produced by overworked craftspeople in Hong Kong sweatshops. But the Original Fascination notices not at all.

It's nice to know that I am not alone in my enduring love for toys, nor in my compulsion to gather them around me. In recent years I have encountered two other disciples of the Original Fascination perhaps even more devoted than I. I was to meet the first of these when I went on a date back in 1983 with a woman named Becky. As I climbed the stairs of her funky Victorian apartment for the first time, the Original Fascination stirred in my core. An entire wall at the top of the stairwell was decorated with the most impressive collection of metal and plastic ray-guns I'd ever seen. An excited inspection of the rooms revealed that every square inch of available horizontal surface area — shelves, window sills, top of the refrigerator, sinks, toilet tank top, kitchen table — was crammed with toy robots, dinosaurs, monsters. My thoughts raced, collided, and jelled: *"This is the girl for me!* Upon inquiry, I was momentarily devastated to learn that the toys belonged to my date's roommate, Paul.

Paul Mavrides makes his living as an artist. He draws comic books, paints paintings, illustrates album covers and books. Usually dressed all in black, Paul wears his hair shaved to the scalp on the sides but bushy on top; on an otherwise clean-shaven face, he sports an unusual little rectangle of beard below his lower lip.

Like me, Paul loved toys in childhood, and "never saw a reason to stop." Unlike me, he likes to take his toys apart and reassemble the pieces into shocking and amusing new juxtapositions. The contents of Paul's wildly disheveled studio look like the tailings of a great whirlwind from some other dimension. Amidst the paintings, sketches, tools, and books, unspeakably alien heads occupy terminally cute babydoll bodies, and vice versa.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, a jar marked "Kangaroos" shares the spice shelf with the paprika and the marjoram. On closer inspection, it proves to contain what look like two-inch pygmy kangaroos afloat in pickling brine. A hanging vegetable basket contains two onions, a few potatoes, and a disembodied head. On the floor under a shelf where no one can see, a considerably upscale "Roach Motel" advertises waterbeds and color TV; a row of Matchbox cars is parked outside. In the hall, Robbie the Robot wields a wind-up chain saw. Over the door to Paul's studio, a detailed, assembled plastic scale model of the Hindenburg has been sawed in half and glued to both sides of the transom so that the miniature dirigible appears to be frozen in the process of *passing through a pane of glass.*

Paul can justify his bizarre collection to the incredulous: "Toy collecting comes with the territory of the kind of work I do. For instance, I often use scale models for reference for illustrations; I often incorporate toys into art objects; and occasionally I'm commissioned to construct a model of something, for which I have to cannibalize other toys." Explanations like this may quell the confusion of Grim Practicalists, but we disciples of the Original Fascination know better.

Considering that she didn't own any toys, things worked out pretty well between Becky and me. In fact, we were eventually married. When she moved in with me, another great disciple of the Original Fascination replaced her as Paul's roommate. Bespectacled Harry S.

(above) More Toys The Original Manufacturers Never Dreamed Of. (below) Satan's Toy Box. All by Paul Mavrides.

"Hal" Robins speaks with careful eloquence, using polysyllabic verbiage whenever possible. He is rarely seen wearing anything but a three-piece suit, complete with pocket watch and chain. Hal can be heard on the San Francisco Bay area radio station KPFA as the amusing host of the weekly late-night "Subgenius Radio Hour," where, among other things, he divines for call-in listeners exactly what dinosaurs they were in previous incarnations. An illustrator and co-creator with Paul of the comic book character Dinoboy, Hal collects dinosaurs.

Mostly *toy* dinosaurs, of course, except for the life-size, museum-quality cast of a *Tyrannosaurus* skull, which occupies the volume of a large dining-room table in the already cramped apartment. (I like these guys' priorities!)

Hal objects to the word "toy." "The only reason that miniature statues of dinosaurs are called "toys" is because of a societal prejudice that associates them with the nursery room," he observes. "Both Paul and I prefer to think of the items we collect as *objets d'art.*" Hal's collection includes plastic, metal, and ceramic dinosaur replicas from all over the world — the U.S., France, Germany, England, Japan, and, of course, Hong Kong. Hal has carefully painted most of his hundred or so figures with lifelike patterns and hues, some suggestive of avian plumage. Living dinosaurs probably really looked like this. On occasion Hal wields an X-Acto knife and glue to surgically modify a dinosaur's crest, jaw, or teeth in order to align an overly imaginative Taiwanese toymaker's vision with paleontological reality. "Often toy dinosaurs are sculpted with too many teeth, all the wrong shape, and all pointing in the wrong direction," notes Hal, who does not strive for anatomical perfection (often an impossibility), but simply to eliminate those features that are grossly "anatomically offensive."

(above) Hal Robins, a modern dinosaur among many. (below) Dinoboy.

In contrast with Paul's wildly cluttered studio, Hal has somehow managed to arrange all of his books and figurines into a very tidily ordered space, resembling the study of a nineteenth-century naturalist. When I ask him why he has chosen to surround himself with meticulously painted replicas of prehistoric life, Hal is thoughtful. "They are handsome objects," he finally observes, "and it gives me great pleasure to have them around." I understand completely. The room vibrates with Original Fascination.

I suppose each of us needs to find his or her own personal totem of Original Fascination. It's been a whole lot of years since I made that pact with mine, and I've always blessed that day. I like to think that my continued reverence for my childhood ideals is responsible for whatever creativity and inspiration I've carried into adult life. Without these qualities, which burn fiercely in youth but are often obscured in adulthood, growing older would not have been worthwhile.

But don't get me wrong. I love being a grown-up. After all, adulthood *does* have its percs — like experience, perspective, patience . . . and enough money at last to afford almost any toy I want. ■

THE CAST OF OTHELLO GOES ON THE NEWLYWED GAME

A TRAGEDY

BY CARLY SOMMERSTEIN

ILLUSTRATED BY LARRY GONICK

Shakespeare would have loved television, and game shows in particular. He had an ear for colloquial speech, and a painfully acute knowledge of our dirty secrets. Carly Sommerstein, a mere sapling of a 21-year-old English major at NYU, claims this piece reflects "an interesting parallel between Eubanks' treatment of his contestants and Shakespeare's treatment of his characters." She says this with an almost straight face, then adds, "I'd like to claim Bob Eubanks as the post-modern heir to Shakespeare's genius, but I'm afraid if I do they'll never let me into grad school."

—Sallie Tisdale

(+) INDICATES LAUGH TRACK

Announcer: From Hollywood, it's the Newlywed Game! Let's meet our newlywed couples for today! Couple #1 — Iago and Emilia *(applause),* couple #2 — Othello and Desdemona *(applause),* and couple #3 — Cassio and Bianca! Here's the star of the Newlywed Game — Bob Eubanks! *(much applause).*

Bob Eubanks: Well, thank you, hello, everybody. Welcome to the Newlywed Game! You know, they say that getting married is an adventure, like going off to war. Well, our show is an adventure too. We'll see if we have any major skirmishes when we start our game, after these messages *(commercial).*

Bob Eubanks: Welcome back to the Newlywed Game. While the wives are off-stage, here is the first 15-point question. Gentlemen: when it comes to making whoopee, what animal will your wives compare you to? Iago, let's start with you.

Iago: I say goats and monkeys!

Bob Eubanks: Judges say they can only accept one response, Iago.

Iago: Aye, monkeys.

Bob Eubanks: Go a little ape, do you, haha! (+) OK. Othello, what will Desdemona say?

Othello: Fair Desdemona knows I have not those soft parts of conversation that chamberers have, she shall forgive my crude article: salt wolves.

Bob Eubanks: A wolf! Great! Cassio, which animal will Bianca say you are most like in bed?

Cassio: I should say a red rooster. My sweet Bianca goes to bed to work and by the cock's crow she rises to play. (+)

Bob Eubanks: Whoa ho! OK gentlemen, let's bring out our lovely ladies in waiting and hear their responses. *(Enter Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca.)* Ladies, here is the question we asked your husbands: when it comes to making whoopee, what animal would you compare your husbands to. Emilia, let's begin with you.

Emilia: Methinks I would compare Iago to a goat. No — a monkey.

Bob Eubanks: Iago said he thought you'd compare him to — the card please — a monkey! 15 points! *(applause)*

Iago: Faith, a goat, too!

Bob Eubanks: Looks like you two have something going, eh?

Emilia: 'Tis excellent well. Alas, 'tis the only time he allows me to bestow my tongue on him.

Iago: Yet that stops not my lady from chiding.

Bob Eubanks: OK, Desdemona, what is your answer?

Desdemona: My lord Othello is an old black ram. (+)

Bob Eubanks: Othello thought you'd say — the card please — a wolf!

Desdemona: No, I should say an old ram more than a salt wolf.

Othello (aside): Does Desdemona tire of me, that she shall soon plague me with the horns of an old ram? Heaven forbid it!

Bob Eubanks: Bianca, what will Cassio say?

Bianca: Michael Cassio is in our bed a gennet, but often a gelding. (+)

Cassio: Customer! Base strumpet! Look you the card!

Bob Eubanks: Oh, Bianca — Cassio thought you'd say rooster.

Bianca: 'Fore God, more a capon than a rooster. My lord hath very poor and unhappy brains for drink. It doth distract him, though he is a Florentine; he rarely comes to me straight.

Cassio: Thou art a liar! If I am a capon, thou art a guinea hen!

Bianca: Alas, I must be circumstanced with my lot in Cassio. I do love him true.

Desdemona: 'Tis the plague of wives to stay loyal, though husbands do quicken.

Emilia: Lady, amen.

Bob Eubanks: At the end of the first exciting round, Iago and Emilia lead by 15 points. Gentlemen, please take your seats off-stage for the next round. *(Exit Othello, Iago and Cassio.)* The next question will be worth 25 points. Ladies, what will your husbands say is their favorite pastime? Bianca, let's start with you.

Bianca: Cassio chronicles small beer at the Sagittary. He is most potent in potting.

Bob Eubanks: Haha, I bet! (+) Desdemona, what does Othello like to do in his spare time?

Desdemona: The noble Moor hath a strange interest in handkerchiefs and sheets. Lately he hath questioned me many times all that I know of them.

Bob Eubanks: Hey, he must be great at a white sale! (+) Haha! Emilia, what will your husband answer?

Emilia: Faith he too hath affects for handkerchiefs! Yet more than this, Iago delights in writing praise and singing songs of soldiers' life.

Bob Eubanks: All right ladies, let's bring those husbands out and find out how well they know their wives. *(Enter Othello, Iago and Cassio, but Othello mistakenly sits in Iago's chair next to Emilia.)*

Iago: Zounds, the lusty Moor hath leapt into my seat! *(Pulls out dagger, stabs Othello.)*

Othello: Murderer most foul! Take this! *(Stabs Iago, they both fall.)*

Bob Eubanks: What's going on here? Couple #1 and couple #2 are disqualified. It looks like couple #3, Cassio and Bianca, are today's winners! *(Applause.)*

Iago: They are *(choke)* not yet yoked! *(Dies.)*

Othello: He will not marry the *(gasp)* callet! *(Dies.)*

Bob Eubanks: Not newlyweds! Cassio, I thought you said Bianca was a housewife!

Cassio: Marry that she may buy herself bread and clothes.

Bob Eubanks: Marry? Are you married or not? What's all this? Judges, can we have a final decision, please. *(Hands him paper.)* The winners of today's game are . . . Desdemona and Emilia!

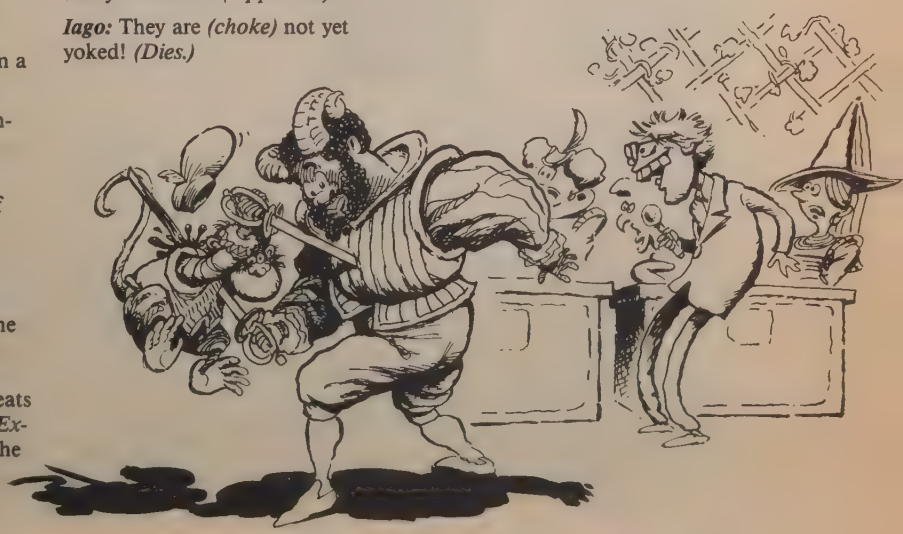
Announcer: As today's winners of the Newlywed Game, here's the special prize chosen just for you — a fabulous Amana Radarange! *(Applause and ooh's.)* Plus Mary Kay sheets in the color of your choice! *(More a and o.)* Cassio and Bianca as runner-up couple for today will receive an assortment of these fine products: York Peppermint patties, Seal-a-Meal, Turtle Wax and Z-Brick!

Desdemona: This game is foolishness.

Emilia: Indeed. 'Tis true that not a year shows us a man.

Bob Eubanks: Congratulations Desdemona and Emilia! Thanks to all of our couples, I'm Bob Eubanks and we'll see you next time on the Newlywed Game, good night!

(Much applause, Bob Eubanks' wardrobe furnished by After Six formals, et al . . .) ■



The Greens Cookbook

The Greens Cookbook *is a meticulously tested collection of living recipes. This from-the-ground-up cookbook champions a world view that what you cook should be determined by the season and by what you find in your garden or in your local supermarket. The proper execution of these recipes does not require a shopping cart of exotic or expensive ingredients; what is asked for is a respect for primary components, simple flavors in vivid combinations.*

At every turn the authors stretch our expectations of what vegetarian cooking can be. The design of the book, by North Point's David Bullen, feels uncluttered and invites use. Containing a treasury of practical information, ***The Greens Cookbook*** *is a work of great delicacy, like rose geranium leaves heightening the perfume of sugared blackberries.* —*John Birdsall and Steve Silberman*

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Potato-Sorrel Soup
This soup is easy to prepare and comforting, the way things made with potatoes often are. The potatoes fall apart into a coarse puree as they cook, and the sorrel brightens the flavor just enough. This soup goes well with many of the vegetable salads as well as with the Winter Squash Gratin or an egg dish, such as the Escarole Frittata.

THE STOCK: *Water is fine for this soup.*

THE SOUP
5 tablespoons butter

The Greens Cookbook
Deborah Madison
with Edward Espe Brown
1987; 396 pp.
$19.95
($21.45 postpaid) from:
Bantam Books
414 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016
or Whole Earth Access

7 cups water
3 leeks, white parts only (about 8 ounces), cut into ¼-inch rounds or strips
4 to 6 ounces sorrel leaves (about 8 cups), stems removed and roughly sliced or chopped
½ teaspoon salt
1½ pounds red potatoes, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced
Pepper
Sour cream or creme fraiche (optional)
1 tablespoon chives, thinly sliced, for garnish

Melt the butter in a soup pot with ½ cup of the water. Add the leeks, sorrel, and salt, and stew, covered, for 5 minutes over medium-low heat. Add the potatoes and cook another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour in the rest of the water and gradually bring it to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 30 minutes.

Taste the soup and add more salt if necessary. Serve the soup with a grinding of black pepper, a spoonful of sour cream or creme fraiche, if desired, and the chives.

Serves four to six.

Good to Eat

Do you eat horses? Dogs? Insects? Of course not — turns the stomach a little. How about milk, or fresh vegetables? Those turn the stomachs of others. This is a fascinating anthropological treatment of food taboos, with chapters on the American love of beef and pork, the history and purpose of cannibalism, cultural perspectives on pets, and an eye-opening section on nutritional beliefs regarding pregnancy and lactation. If you think you know cuisine, read Marvin Harris. —*Sallie Tisdale*

Good to Eat
Marvin Harris
1985; 299 pp.
$17.95
postpaid from:
Simon & Schuster
Attn.: Mail Order
200 Old Tappan Road
Old Tappan, NJ 07675
or Whole Earth Access

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One might at this point wish to resort to a bad-to-think argument. Granting that insects can be eaten without harmful effects, nonetheless the fact remains that many creeping, crawling creatures are associated with dirt and filth, which in turn are associated with disease. It is this mental association, whether true or false in the actual case, which makes insect eating so unappetizing for most Euro-Americans. But why should anyone associate dirtiness with clean-living locusts, beetle larvae, silkworms, termites, moth larvae, and hundreds of other insect species which spend their lives in the great outdoors, far from humans, eating grass, leaves, and wood? If anything, most insects are as clean as most products of fields and barnyards. Was not European agriculture historically based on raising crops fertilized with the excrement of cows, horses, pigs, and other animal droppings? If all it takes for a food species to fall into ill repute is an association with dirt, humankind would have starved to death long ago.

How to Repair Food

The subtitle says it all: "What to do when you discover that just about any kind of food or drink is . . . " name your problem. Overcooked? Bland? Too thick or thin? Curdled, stuck together, mushy, dried out? A simple, alphabetical format with lots of tricks. —*Sallie Tisdale*

How to Repair Food
Marina and John Bear
1987; 118 pp.
$5.95
($6.95 postpaid) from:
Ten Speed Press
P. O. Box 7123
Berkeley, CA 94707
or Whole Earth Access

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Cans (Key-Opening Type)
Key is missing: Try using a regular can opener on the opposite side. Write a nasty letter to the manufacturer.

Key is stuck halfway through opening can: Holding the can with an oven mitt or a dishtowel, try sticking a table knife through the hole in the key handle to get more leverage. (If you use your naked hands, you may as well get the Band-Aids out first to save time.) If this fails, and the contents can't be scraped out, hold the can over a bowl and try a can opener on the other side. Write a *very* nasty letter to the manufacturer.

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Rice
Burned: As soon as you discover you've burned the rice again, turn off the flame, place the heel of a loaf of bread on top of the rice, cover the pot, and wait 5 minutes. Virtually all the scorched taste should disappear into the bread. Serve the rice to friends and the bread to enemies.

BACKSCATTER: echoes from readers back to *Whole Earth Review* (27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, California 94965)

Enormous power of nothings

Readers of K. Eric Drexler's "A Technology of Tiny Things: Nanotechnics and Civilization" (*WER* #54, p. 8) may be interested in a parallel and perhaps intellectually more fundamental examination of the enormous power in little things. These short excerpts come from *The Generation of Wealth,* a new book by the extraordinary educator Caleb Gattegno, who likes to call the little things that make life and the world "nothings."

- The focus of attention [in many sciences] became minute amounts of energy — catalysts, hormones, enzymes, vitamins, electrons, photons — each of which had enormous repercussions in the various systems of which they were a part. I like to call these bits of energy that, correctly manipulated, have such powerful effects, "nothings." . . . It is "nothings," both material and human, that give us the opportunity to command our history.

- Physics tells us that we cannot get more energy out of something than the amount we put in. But the identification of "nothings" — including hormones, vitamins, and ideas — proves that there are conditions when an extremely small outlay of energy produces a remarkably large return. "Nothings" show us that we can get a great deal for very little, a true and extraordinary generation of wealth.

- What is knowledge but a "nothing," something very small that can have enormous effects? Today, millions of people are devoting their time and mental energy to the knowledge industry, and "nothings" are emerging as the true occupation of humans.

- Where does the awareness underlying the idea of a generation of wealth come from? Homo sapiens needed only to return to himself and to recognize that the mind is not an energy system regulated by the principles of thermodynamics (which of course regulate some of the behaviors of cosmic energy). For in our mind, we use only "nothings," and everything we have generated, everything we have accomplished, results from these "nothings." *We therefore have always known how to generate wealth.*

Gattegno, whose forty to fifty years of work should have made him a household name (among other things, he knows how people learn), has published *The Generation of Wealth* himself, and the book is available from Educational Solutions, 95 University Place, New York, NY 10003-4555.

Harris Dienstfrey
Brooklyn, NY

Black fiction

We were perusing the Summer 1987 issue of *Whole Earth Review* and found Stewart Brand's position on Royal Dutch "Reagan" Shell and the South African boycott (#55, p. 134) needed clarifying.

Since his understandably brief reply left many vital questions unanswered, please consider our submission as an attempt to remedy this data shortage. In our opinion, it would be perfectly suited to your next theme issue, "Meta-Racism in Global Reality."

Pet Schrodinger's cat for us.

Dear Royal Dutch Shell Answer Man:
Q: When I'm driving busloads of diamond miners from the homelands to the Oranje Vrystaat, I am distracted by moans, the singing of hymns, and general complaining. Would a special kind of muffler reduce the noise?

SB: It's useless to reason with inferior thinkers. However, the next time I'm in Jo'burg speculating in Krugerrands, I'll recommend to my friend "Pickles" Botha that electric larynx prods be supplied to all drivers. I agree, nothing is more distracting than human cries when you're trying to do business.

Q: The "boy" who nightly washes my car refuses to buff the bumper properly. Should I allow him home to Ciskei this Easter to see his wife and 11 children?

SB: Jan Smuts once said, "The destiny of the elite is reflected in their rearview mirrors." Based on fragmentary knowledge, I say, "A barrel of oil a day keeps Independence Day away."

Q: Where's a good place to park in Sun City?

SB: Whenever I attend conferences there with Katinka Matson, I usually have one of the colored valets attend to this matter.

Q: How much toll should I expect to pay on the Buthelezi Great White Way through KwaZululand?

SB: If you have to ask, you can't afford it. In my case all tolls, tips, and amenities are tax deductible to the Point and the WELL.

Q: How does the discriminating employee of Royal Dutch Shell save gasoline without making moral judgments which are counterproductive and lead to entropy?

SB: Turn your back, hide your wallet, boot up your hard disk, kiss the eye of the pyramid, close your eyes, collect your paycheck, stroke your literary agent, write it off, network it, rationalize it, invoke the communist threat, visit Kenya, cry at the life-bending poignancy, hot tub with Katinka, pose, and accept no criticism. Then pretend that abdicating responsibility is the global point of view. Above all, make Gaia while the shines shine shoes.

Q: Is there any difference between black cars and white cars?

SB: This is not for me to say. However, if you get better mileage by working with white cars, that's where your white bread is buttered.

Q: If Hitler were alive today, would you boycott Germany?

SB: If Hitler were alive today, would I boycott Germany? The answer comes out of answering three other questions: 1) If South Africa — or Nicaragua, or Cuba, or the Soviet Union — were a wine and cheese tasting party, would I prefer a Gruyere? 2) Would not a boycott constitute negative reinforcement and progenerate rhythms that impede one's cash flow? 3) What are the specifics, the awkward details of Auschwitz, and, like Polismoor Prison, how much of a concentration camp's structure is built on a misunderstanding? You see, I've looked at non-profit from Botha sides now.

Q: If I. W. Farben offered you a PR job in 1939, would you take it if your magazine were in financial trouble?

SB: Royal Dutch Shell is hardly I. W. Farben, and I am hardly Neville Chamberlain. Yet, I do say, "A piece of the action in our time."

Q: Has the world view of Gaia evolved into a notion of a one-world fascist political party?

SB: It depends on my wallet's biota. What's good for General Motors is good for General Pinochet, just as elitism is the mother of philosophical invention. Anyway, the idea of Gaia is large enough to accommodate my ambition and ego, whatever expedient forms they may take.

Bob Tarte
Bill Holm
Grand Rapids, MI

Reality Club sandwiches

What elitist crap!!! I was appalled with the Reality Club (*WER* #55). Listen, when I was in college we had a Reality

Potato chip art

I am enclosing a picture of my potato chip paintings. I hope that you will enjoy seeing it.

I got the idea to paint potato chips on the way home from the grocery store. I coat the chips with a secret formula to strengthen and protect them. Then, I paint them with acrylic paint. Each one is original and permanent.

Linda Lee Curtis
Phoenix, AZ

P. S. I paint on lima beans & rocks, too.

Club. No, I'm not kidding. This was back in 1967. You took two pieces of white bread, a big piece of Velveeta cheese and lots of baloney and presto!!! — a reality club! Do you realize how condescending, how patronizing the following sounds: " . . . a tiny minority of people in the world do the significant thinking for everybody else." "The number of people who explore the epistemological rhythmics of human thought is relatively small." Bullshit or should I say "bull rings"? My daddy who never finished high school has been exploring for over 60 years, he just doesn't have the "appropriate vocabulary."

I'm sooo sorry to see they need a sugar daddy to give them a permanent place to meet. How sad it is that most of the meeting had to take place in "living rooms" (of all places). That must make the participants feel sort of common. I have a suggestion for the appropriate place for meetings . . . You know the grates in front of the 42nd Street subway station or the ones down by St. Patrick's? They have my permission to meet there. The Club will find a nice set there during the winter. Talking with the street people that gather there, will allow them to measure the degree to which they are being successful and creating a "difference that makes a difference."

Really thanks. Lord knows when I have had so much fun reading any issue of *WER*?! I enjoy them all! I guess SB and JB and the rest of the contributors take this stuff seriously. I just can't help but think a lot of times how stupid and trite and (to use a phrase from my generation) how over 30 they sound (even though I know they don't mean to be). It makes me laugh and feel a soft spot in my heart for MTV and the punks.

James "Reality Club — please don't hit me again" Dearner

Lessons from history

The Spanish Armada was the ultimate weapon of its day. Huge lumbering ships, the Armada was outmaneuvered by a mass of English warships and fishing boats.

The Maginot Line was the ultimate defense of its day. Huge concrete bunkers and gun placements aimed at Germany, the Maginot Line was not used. The sly Nazis simply marched around the end of the Line and sneered at the backs of the now-useless guns.

Now Star Wars is the ultimate weapon of the day. Were I a Russian general, I would stop Star Wars like this:

First, by confusion. I would build as many cheap dummy rockets as I could fling into space. Each decoy would be able to jettison a few dozen exploding cans of tinfoil. A mass of orbiting tinfoil looks just like an orbiting ICBM on a radar screen.

Second, I would attack the Star Wars satellites themselves. How many small, cheap rockets and decoys could such a satellite hold off? 1000? 3000? For how long? If 500 balls of tinfoil, 30 dummy rockets, and one antisatellite missile headed for one killer satellite every ten minutes, which one would it shoot? Would the killer satellite defend itself or its country first? Catch-22! A dead satellite cannot defend its country, but a dead country needs no satellite.

Third, I would deliver my bombs without fanfare and rockets. If millions of pounds of dope can be smuggled into our country by pirates with Cessnas, how many nuclear bombs could be smuggled in that way? Perhaps there are caches of such bombs already, waiting for a signal . . .

Fourth, I would rely heavily on cruise missiles. Small, low-flying, hard to detect, cruise missiles operate beneath a shield that has been stopping particle beams since God turned the Sun on — the atmosphere. Surely a high percentage of cruise missiles could penetrate any system.

Last, I would not worry about it too much. To expect a trillion dollar computer, programmed with an estimated million lines of code, to run without a glitch first time, under the stress of battle, when it is untested is ridiculous. I operate a computer for a living, I *know*. The very best programs after millions of hours of testing by thousands of computer testers, still have bugs.

Star Wars, in my opinion, is the biggest waste of money since Rajneesh bought his twelfth Rolls Royce. I don't want to see my country bankrupted by a harebrained gizmo that will be obsolete before the ink dries on the blueprints. Let's forget about it.

Larry Lile
Wooldridge, MO

The ultimate field guide

Found in Bookpeople's Spring 1987 catalog:

NATURE BOUND
POCKET FIELD GUIDE
Ron Dawson

A "go along" handbook for nature-bound explorers in the North American field and forest. Filled with vibrant photographs of poisonous and edible plants, and everything you need to know about survival including how to determine the wind chill factor, how to make snowshoes or a rope, how to treat sunstroke or a snake bite, how to avoid poison hemlock, and how to accept and transcend physical death through the words of Jesus Christ.

336 pp, illustrated, 5×4½, smyth sewn, $12.00, NEW

The Arabic veil of censorship

Your magazine is a breath of fresh air in this very restrictive country. I luckily got a copy of your *Essential Whole Earth Catalog* through a book club without the local censors wreaking havoc through the text. You wouldn't believe how even the most innocuous of texts and magazine pictures and articles can be torn out or covered in black felt-tipped pen streaks. Believe it or not, some of the Western women living at Aramco are hired to censor magazines and newspapers sold in their area. It's sad to think that people who have grown up in the freedoms of America and the West can, for a few dollars, actively participate in censorship.

Please do not print my name if you decide to print my comments on Saudi censorship.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fungus guidance, please

Bruce Ames, in a widely noticed review article on Dietary Carcinogens (I)

noted that hydrazines (most of which are potent carcinogens) are present in "edible mushrooms." This contradicts the (un-referenced) statement by Dr. Weil ("Growing Shitake Commercially" (*WER* #54, p. 19) that Shitake mushrooms have "antiviral, anticancer, immune stimulating and cholesterol lowering properties."

If Dr. Weil could take the time to cite references to that effect, I'd be forever in his debt — Shitake are absolutely delicious! I've been avoiding them ever since reading Dr. Ames' article in 1983.

(1) Ames B. Dietary Carcinogens & Anticarcinogens — oxygen radicals & degenerative diseases. Ames Science Sep. 23, 1983 V. 221 pg. 1256-64.

Michael S. Lasky
Brooklyn, NY

Anticancer mushrooms

In answer to Michael Lasky's comment on my statement about healthful properties of mushrooms:

Carcinogenic hydrazines are, indeed, present in the common supermarket mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*) and in some wild species (notably *Gyromitra esculenta*). They are not found in most species of wild, edible mushrooms nor in many of the cultivated oriental mushrooms that show anticancer, antiviral & immune enhancing properties in animal tests. Those effects are well documented in the Japanese medical literature, some of which is in English. (I will be happy to supply Mr. Lasky with references.) Among the most promising species are shiitake (*Lentinus edodes*), enokidake (*Flammulina velutipes*), & matsutake (*Tricholoma matsutake* & *T. magnavelare*). By the way, pesticide residues on *Agaricus bisporus* are probably a better reason for minimizing consumption of that mushroom than fears of hydrazines.

Andrew Weil
Tucson, AZ

Torture criteria

I will be working with a program in Seattle to aid political refugees to this country; part of my work will be to verify, through medical examination, that individuals have been tortured. Although the criteria is similar to those used to verify abuse in children, there are some important differences, and I need to know more about them. Legally established guidelines are preferred; I also appreciate talking to other medical personnel who have had to deal with this issue.

Daniel Erickson, M.D.
2768 Pierpont Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93001
805/648-2090

Relatively slower

I find it hard to believe that a physicist would believe that two objects can have a relative speed greater than that of light, but there it is on page 70 of *WER* #55. Gerald Feinberg should know that distance cannot change the speed limit of light. At relativistic speeds, velocities do not add linearly: $v_1 + v_2 = v_3$. I do not recall the formula now, but it shows that two galaxies moving away from the earth in opposite directions at ½ the speed of light are not moving away from each other at the speed of light, but at some lesser speed. I hope you can get this straight.

Craig Hunter
Melrose Park, IL

P. S. As I now recall the formula for adding speeds is something like this, with units defined appropriately: tan v_1 + tan v_2 = tan v_3. For the arguments to be set in radians, set $v = \frac{\pi}{2}\frac{u}{c}$, where u is the speed expressed in the same units as c, the speed of light.

It all depends . . .

Craig Hunter's statement of the law for adding speeds [above] is correct for situations to which special relativity theory applies. But it isn't relevant to the expanding universes with horizons that I was describing. Such universes are curved, rather than flat, and in them special relativity and the velocity addition law do not apply over great distances. When the more inclusive general theory of relativity is used, there is no problem with objects having relative velocities greater than that of light. Having said that, it is fair to add that the notion of relative velocity of objects far from one another in an expanding universe is a complicated one, and my statement that these velocities can be greater than that of light should really be taken more as a way of speaking than a statement of something that could easily be measured. A clear discussion of horizons and related matters is given in the book *Cosmology*, by E. Harrison, to which I refer Mr. Hunter and other interested readers.

Gerald Feinberg
New York, NY

Shit-disturber deactivated

When Summer '87 arrived in the mailbox, I sat right down for a quick look and promptly boggled my mind with pg. 115.

Not to worry, along came my mathematician son, Bill Stafford (also a subscriber) & in a few minutes solved the mystery & wrote out the explanation for me.

And since I still had lingering doubts (it's so hard to realize that your kids get where they know a lot more than you), he was kind enough to carefully cut out of graph paper little shapes so even his mom could see that they just won't make a rectangle & now I believe!

Hope this helps:

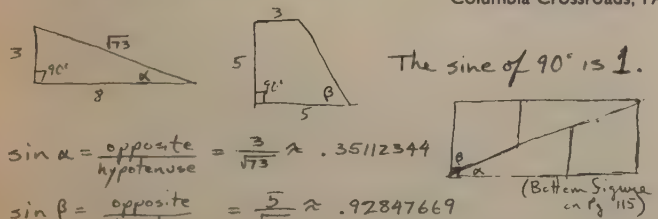
The sum of the areas of 2 trapezoids of the given dimensions together with 2 right triangles of the given dimensions is 64. Therefore, the top figure is correct.

In fact, the four pieces cannot be fit together to form a rectangle without overlays.

One reason for this is that the sum of the smaller acute angle of the right triangle added to the only acute angle of the trapezoid is greater than 90°.

The lower left corner of the bottom figure makes this sum appear to be exactly 90°.

Nancy Vineski
Columbia Crossroads, PA



Knife with a damaged reputation

I have been a long-term (32 years!) addict of Victorinox Swiss Army knives, as well as *WER* (for less time!). I am sorry, however, to relate a disturbing recent attempt to repair my knife.

The Victorinox package insert states:

> If, for any reason (i.e. broken blade, scissors, spring, handle, etc.) your VICTORINOX knife needs repair, please send it via

certified or registered mail only, to the address below. We will immediately acknowledge receipt and advise you of our generous repair or replacement policy.

My knife suffered (through a fall) a broken tip and slightly bent small blade. I mailed it as instructed to Shelton, CT with a warm letter and no expectation that Victorinox was responsible for the damage. I was disappointed, however, to have the knife returned unrepaired with an unsigned "post-it" stating:

> We are unable to grind the small blade down. Replacing the blade can not be done its not a defect in the knife (sic).

My high opinion of the knife is undamaged, but my confidence in the US distributor is not. I expected a "generous repair or replacement policy" and competent repair, rather than a denial of responsibility.

Perhaps my expectations were unrealistic in this day and age, but the lack of repair possibilities should be weighed in deciding to purchase these excellent yet expensive knives.

William T. Hole, M.D.
Barrington, RI

Cult tyranny

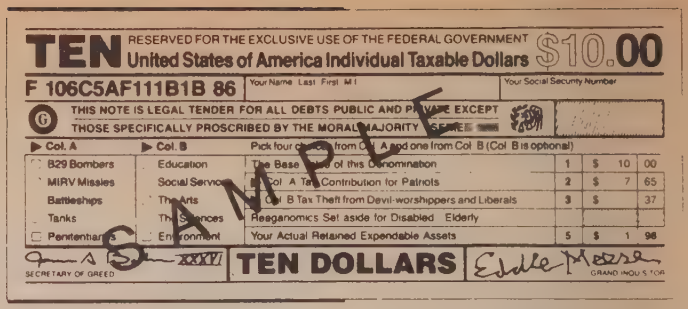
I believe your interview with J. Gordon Melton ("Why Cults Flourish," *WER* #54, p. 48) obscures, rather than illuminates the subject of cults. Please allow me to address a few key points.

First, Melton fuzzes the definition of the term "cult." Cult watchers recognize that cults are not limited to religious groups, as Melton suggests. There are cultic businesses, political groups, and others. What distinguishes a cult is the use of "mind control" or "brainwashing" to gain and keep recruits. Most critics of cults use as their standard reference *The Psychology of Totalism* by Robert J. Lifton, which lists the characteristics of brainwashing in chapter 22. Berkeley psychologist Margaret Singer adds that cults often use "deception" to gain access to people for purposes of indoctrination. One might reasonably question whether a conversion experience under such circumstances is in fact a delusion resulting from abusive forms of behavior modification. "New" or non-traditional religions, which also happen to be scams for money, sex, power; or are fronting for criminal, business, political or governmental interests, are not merely different or misunderstood. While Melton notes that some Christians define cults as non-Christians, or heretics, this has not been the main issue. While there are some semantic problems with the term, there are important issues which are obscured by using "cult" synonymously with "sect." Anti-cult activists, frustrated by relativists like Melton sometimes use the term "destructive cult."

Second, Melton fuzzes the issues of abuse in cults by saying that mainstream religious leaders also sometimes abuse their position. Abuses in cults, however, tend to be the rule, rather than the exception. For example, we do not hear of mainstream religions requiring members (often as a matter of doctrine, not merely the practices of renegades), separation from family, friends, their past lives, and other outside contacts. Similarly, Melton's assertion that "Jim Jones' People's Temple was a member of the National Council of Churches" requires clarification. Jones was a minister in the Disciplines of Christ, a mainstream protestant denomination that, among many others, is a member of the National Council of Churches. No individual churches are members of the NCC. It so happens that Jones' parent denomination investigated the People's Temple prior to his departure for Guyana, but somehow, he got by. In any case, Jones' beliefs and practices were not at all characteristic of the denomination. Jones was the exception, not the rule.

It should be noted, however, that mainstream denominations are not immune from cultism, and are in fact, being systematically infiltrated by the totalitarian "shepherding movement." An excellent investigative report on shepherding appears in the Spring 1987 Covert Action Information Bulletin ($6.00, Box 50272, Washington, DC 20004 202/737-5317).

Finally, I believe it is possible to accept non-western and non-traditional religious groups, while also recognizing deceptive and destructive cults for what they are. Sufi Sage Idries Shah, for example, is a leader of a religious tradition that pre-dates Islam, but is new (as Melton notes) to the U.S. In his 1978 book *Learning How to Learn: Psychology and Spirituality in the Sufi Way*, Shah repeatedly denounces the "guruist cults of the West" that distort and pervert the religious traditions of the East, including Sufiism.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Novelist Doris Lessing, in her introduction to the book seconds and underscores this point: "It is the tyrant, benevolent or wicked, who has to be exposed."

An excellent source of information on mind control and cults is the American Family Foundation (which is closely related to the Cult Awareness Network, whose newsletter was reviewed alongside the Melton interview). AFF, a "professional research and educational organization in the field of cults and unethical social influence" publishes books, a newsletter and a scholarly journal. Box 336, Weston, MA 02193 617/893-0930.

Fred Clarkson
Washington, DC

Corrections

Dear Whole Earth Editor,

I did not think I had achieved sufficient literary notoriety to acquire a *nom de plume* so soon, and here you have unwittingly bestowed one upon me. The piece on "Playing Hardball with Soft Skills" (*WER* #54, p. 121) was actually written by "Tom Zink" (that's me), but somehow, somewhere, between my submission and the printed page, Letter #26 got replaced by Letter #6 and the piece is attributed to "Tom Fink."

It may interest you to know that you are not the first to use "Fink" in place of my actual surname, but those who've gone before you knew me lots better and used it far more intentionally. Ah, but if that's the worst they call me, who am I to complain? And, ah, if the bank cashes my $40 check when it's made out to a "Fink," who am I to raise a stink?

Anyway, Cheers!

Tom Zink (a.k.a. Fink)

There was an error in the information on ordering *Rapids of Change* (*WER* #55, p. 123). The address should be 777 West Morris Street, rather than 111 West Morris Street.

On p. 127 of *WER* #55, the sweeping vista of clearcuts in the Willamette National Forest which illustrated the article "Do We Really Want Diversity?" was the work of photographer David Cross. ■

Gossip

Anniversaries are peculiarly modern rituals. We personify bridges, constitutions, scientific discoveries, and statues by giving them birthday parties. Time itself — in this case the advance of years — gets an anniversary. The TV networks and mass magazines tell us that it's the 20th anniversary of the sixties. (It's also the 30th anniversary of the fifties, the 40th of the forties, and so on. But no one is paying attention to that except Larry Gonick. See his Cartoon History of the Fifties on p. 84, a part of his ***Cartoon Guide to United States History,*** *to be published Fall 1987 by Harper & Row.)*

These lame celebrations are simply an excuse to be interested in events that are more than two weeks old — a no-no in our fashionable media. ***People, Life,*** *PBS, the* ***Baltimore Sun,*** *all suddenly want to know what the sixties had to say. They call Whole Earth because we're still alive. Stewart has been interviewed, photographed, documented (most enjoyably on a PBS special with Ken Kesey) because he's a sixties character who's still making waves in the eighties. "How have you changed?" they ask him, and us. We babble, wave our arms indecisively, and mumble incoherently about no more gurus, small business ethics, and communities made by underground communications. We're learning how to be responsibly radical. Professional mavericks.*

How about a real-life example? We stole the guest editor of this issue, Sallie Tisdale, from Portland, Oregon, where she's a nurse, professional author on taboo subjects (autopsies, senility, burning) and full-time mother. She has three rambunctious children (Rafael, 10, Morgan, 9, and Annie Rose, 3), "a poorly disciplined dog," and hopes to adopt a fourth child. Sallie, 30, dropped out of high school, never graduated, but found her way into nursing school. "I live inside my head. I do nursing so I can afford to write what I want rather than write what magazines want me to." She has written three books in four years. Her most recent is ***Harvest Moon: Portrait of a Nursing Home,*** *available this fall from Henry Holt Publishers.*

Don Ryan

Sallie Tisdale and her daughter Annie Rose. Annie has the bottle.

Passionate, playful conversation on any subject seems to lubricate her productivity. As an editor she is embarrassingly efficient. As I write this, Sallie is slightly ahead of schedule, right on budget, pleasurably organized. I've never been any of those. Regrettably, she has sworn to go back to her family after she tucks this issue to bed.

Other news: Richard Schauffler (Circulation) is back from a six-week conference in Bulgaria on trends in socialism. Donald and Susan Ryan (Production) have finally begun building their own house, something they've been threatening to do for years. Richard Nilsen (Assistant Editor) took a few days off to help with behind-the-scenes logistics during the filming of Francis Ford Coppola's new flick, ***Tucker,*** *being shot (in part) in the Bay Area. This is Richard's first feature film; usually he moonlights as a location scout for commercials (Pepsi, Safeway, etc.), which he says pay better than films. Cindy (Bookkeeper) and Dick (Newsstand Sales) Fugett are T-minus 3 weeks and counting to the launch of their firstborn.*

*Kathleen O'Neill and James Donnelly (Production) traveled to America's heartland this spring, stopping off in Kentucky, Michigan, and Wisconsin. James bought an accordion from Elderly Instruments (***EWEC** *p. 339) and was startled in Wyoming, where a pair of shoes was stolen from outside his motel room door — "possibly by a coyote," he reports, "who thought it was carrion."*

Copy editor Ken Conner's first novel, ***Blood Moon,*** *will be published Sept. 4 in hardback by Doubleday. The plot is a suspenseful account of a private pilot's investigation of a fellow pilot's crash in the pot fields of northern California.* —Kevin Kelly

Richard Schauffler at a textile plant in Bulgaria. Richard has the mustache.

NEWSBREAK: As of mid-1987, five billion people live on this planet. In 47 years the Earth's population has increased by 250 percent; graphed out, it looks frighteningly like the S-curves of fruit fly populations in closed environments, climbing faster and higher into oblivion. —ST

TURN, TURN, TURN

A season for everything; a time to receive, a time to give.

As a dedicated reader of this magazine, I was once on the receiving end of a message like this. I imagine that gives me liberty, despite being the current editor (and a still-loyal reader) to speak for many other readers like me.

Each year at Whole Earth renewal time I eagerly signed up for a joy-ride that I hoped would carry me over new, strange territories. What I wanted was to hang on with white knuckles as Stewart Brand, J. Baldwin, Anne Herbert and others zoomed into the cultural jungles and urban byways flushing out new creatures. I wanted full-throttle explorations of taboo lands, and high-octane news, and pure merry pranksterism.

I usually got what I wanted. I also got things that I hadn't planned on: self-education skills, an alternative political sense, and a respect for small organizations. To my mind, I picked up a handle that would allow me to grasp many other lessons beyond those mentioned in the magazine or Catalogs. Through their advice I participated in the difficult-to-articulate shift in attitude that came with the all-at-once discovery of social, material and intellectual tools birthed in the 1960s. I felt a kind of debt to the publication.

Now that I am editor of this magazine, I get to employ these skills, perhaps in repayment. I also see that those exploits of boldness and wild happenings were (and are) immensely hard work. The whoomph I received as a reader came from the massive effort of a few individuals who carried into clarity a large wave of unclear aspirations and uninformed hopes. Uncommon work.

As a user of the magazine, I think Whole Earth informs a time of significant change. I use "inform" in the sense that Paul Hawken does in his economic theory — to increase the value of a product by adding information rather than adding mass or material. The advantages of informing are broadcast widely. As editor I know from letters to me that my own gain as a reader is quite common. I also see that the success of many small organizations and, in some cases, individual reputations have been well served by the coevolutionary benefits nursed by the magazine.

There is a smell in the air that suggests our society will be immersed in another time of meaningful change in the late '80s and early '90s. One component of this shift is a simple matter of age. A large number of Whole Earth readers are coming into positions of potential importance in government, business, school, the arts, science. I think we will need a magazine that dares print anything, and dares question the prevailing dogma, left, right or otherwise, just as we do now. What a sad succession it would be if there wasn't at least one magazine in the world ready to poke the next sacred cow, and point to unconventional solutions.

I'm asking readers of Whole Earth to help prepare this magazine to maintain its role as cultural instigator, and be poised for yet another decade of stirring up good works. Through the Point Foundation, Whole Earth has given away over $1 million in grants during its 16-year tenure. For a period of three years it ranked in the top 100 foundations in disbursements. Now it's Whole Earth's turn to seek funds. We require $30,000 to seed a no-frills direct mail program. (If you want the boring financial details, we can give them to you.) Direct mail will raise our circulation, and pay for itself in two years while amplifying its gain every year after. It is the single most effective action the magazine can take at the moment (and one which we have long neglected). Most magazines simply evaporate without an ongoing direct mail program. That's an increasingly real danger for us.

A reader has sent us a $10,000 interest-free loan to begin a direct mail effort, but we still need $20,000 from our readers. I'm asking you to send a portion of that. It's tax deductible because we are a nonprofit educational organization. It's an investment because we'll keep the gift moving. Would you send in a check for whatever you think we've been worth to you, to be used in funding our direct mail campaign for the coming years? —Kevin Kelly

ATTENTION ALL NEWSSTAND READERS:

This is a subscription magazine. We are almost entirely supported by subscription fees. When you buy an issue on the newsstand we make a pittance of only 17 cents per copy, when all is said and done. Unsold copies are not returned to us. They are ripped into paper pulp by the magazine distributor. We suffer this humiliation so that new readers can discover us and, having found us, join us. Now that you've gotten this far, why not subscribe? It costs you no more and you get your issues mailed to your house. But we get full benefit of the cover price to plow back into improving the magazine. A clearcut instance of win-win mutual cooperation, if there ever was one.

*At the moment there is further reason to subscribe. Starting next year, **WER**'s price will be $5 per issue, or $20 per year, an increase of $2 per year. If you subscribe now at the old price of $18, you will not only get **WER** in your mailbox, you'll be getting it cheaper than buying it on the newsstand in the future. (Current subscribers should also make hay while the sun shines. Renew now at the old price.)*

As we have been learning, small business is cash flow. The cash flow advantages to Whole Earth of having a three-year subscription from a reader (money up front, no need to bill for three years) are sufficient for us to to offer an inducement of a free book. If you mail us a check for three years at the old price, we'll send you a complimentary book of our best articles (350 pages), printed on archival, acid-free paper. It's an excellent way for a new subscriber to catch up. Go to the ordering card at the back of the magazine for instructions.

What's life like with our cash flow?

Like perpetually skidding along the edge of a cliff. We're about to engage in a gradual direct-mail campaign to boost circulation. Here goes the clutch . . .

—Kevin Kelly

WHOLE EARTH REVIEW

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Point/Whole Earth Consolidated Report:
Second Quarter (April-June) 1987

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Mailing list rental	5,150
Unclassifieds	1,400
Direct distribution	12,751
Dell (national newsstand)	12,519
Sales: EWEC	4,907
WESC	448
Best of CQ	239
Syndicated column	7,150
Royalties:	467
Contributions	4,570
Interest	338
Miscellaneous	3,030
Total Income:	**$ 167,969**
EXPENSES	
Salaries: Editorial	$ 19,242
Production	12,360
Circulation	10,966
Office	5,415
Research	2,718
Outside production services	962
Writers/contributors	8,850
Magazine printing	25,367
Subscription fulfillment	9,589
Circulation promotion	6,905
Direct distribution	969
Dell (national newsstand)	2,386
Mailing list rental	104
Fulfillment: EWEC	534
Purchases: WESC	236
Syndicated column	6,015
Computer networks	214
Insurance:	927
Taxes:	
Payroll FICA	3,737
Other	2,343
Supplies/research	3,645
Equipment rent/maintenance	1,355
Telephone/networks	1,814
Postage	1,926
Auto/travel	339
Rent/maintenance/utilities	9,371
Legal/professional services	614
Interest/bank charges	647
Miscellaneous expenses	1,616
Total Expenses	**$ 141,166**
PROFIT/LOSS	**26,803**

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO follow these quarterly financial reports, it may be a shock to see a $26,803 profit. It screams for an explanation.

In May we sent out one of our largest renewal mailings, offering a free copy of *News That Stayed News* with all three-year subscriptions. The offer generated a very large response, about doubling the amount of money we received in June. Getting subscriptions, however, means we have an obligation to send the magazine out to the subscribers, so some of the apparent profit we're showing hasn't actually been earned. It's also worthwhile to note that in April and May, we lost over $10,000 each month. June was a one-month rescue operation that temporarily bailed us out. I suspect we'll lose money again in July, probably about $10,000. We are working on a budget and hope that — through diligent efforts at cutting costs, and even more diligent efforts at finding new subscribers — we can, at least, break even by year's end.

—Cindy Fugett

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Stewart Brand, Doug Carlson, Robert Fuller, Huey Johnson, Kevin Kelly

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Progressive Graphics, Oregon, IL (film); American Press, Columbia, MO.

The WELL Financial Statement

Total Income	$ 94,736
Total Expenses	99,775
PROFIT/LOSS	**—5,039**

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Back Issues

The quickest way to order back issues of this magazine is not from us but from Whole Earth Access (see address above). ***CoEvolution Quarterly*** issues 14-43 are $3.50 each, postage paid, or $10 for four. Each ***WER*** back issue is $3 for issues 44-47, $4.50 for 48-55, and $5 for 56, postage paid. All 28 available **CQ** issues are sold as a set for $34, postage paid.

Recent WER Mailing List Renters

Chi Pants, Christian Science Monitor, Greenpeace, SEVA Foundation, Sierra Club, New Age, Center for Science in the Public Interest, American Rivers.

If you want your name left off mailing list rentals, please write and tell us.

Update

Plants of the Gods *by Schultes and Hofmann, which was out of print when Peter Warshall called it "the best modern 'herbal'" for psychedelic plants in* ***EWEC*** *last year, has found new life as a finely done paperback from Alfred van der Mark Inc., 1133 Broadway/Suite 1301, New York, NY 10010. $16.95 postpaid.*
—Richard Nilsen

One of our all-time favorites — ***Architecture Without Architects****, by Bernard Rudofsky — is back in print. You can order it from University of New Mexico Press, Journalism Bldg/Rm. 220, Albuquerque, NM 87131. $13.95 postpaid. —J. Baldwin*

*The new address for Bat Conservation International (****WER*** *#55, p. 125) is P. O. Box 162603, Austin, TX 78716.*

J. Baldwin's '83 Toyota Tercel 4 x 4 wagon just turned 75,000 miles. Total repairs: 29¢. Average gas mileage: 31. Major objections: none. Current opinion: still the best all-purpose small family wagon available.

Preserves

Join the **Whole Earth Preservation Society and Volleyball Reserves.** Your $25 donation helps support the magazine; in return, you receive four issues of a quarterly newsletter filled with gossip, news, letters and other information. We'll print your name in the magazine (unless you prefer otherwise). Send your check to Whole Earth Review, 27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA 94965. (The newsletter is mailed between magazine issues to readers who have recently joined the Preservation Society.) Thanks for your support.

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Share the Whole Earth Review — give a library a subscription! These people have (since last issue):

David Buhmann *to Wood River Public Library, Wood River, IL and to Miles City Public Library, Miles City, MT;*
Mr. & Mrs. Keith Conrad in memory of the Honorable Roy C. Olsen, Mayor of Sands Point *to Manhasset Public Library, Manhasset, NY;*
Tremaine & Gail Arkley *to the Library of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Research Laboratory, Corvallis, OR;*
Joseph Bauch *to Fort Gay Public Library, Fort Gay, WV;*
Milo Jarvis *to Richmond Memorial Library, Batavia, NY.*

These libraries want to be adopted.

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Joliet Public Library, *Joliet, IL;*
Lewis & Clark Library, *Helena, MT.*

Attention Iowa and Oregon librarians: *there are three gift subscriptions available to Iowa libraries from Edward Mead and four gift subscriptions available to Oregon libraries from Tremaine & Gail Arkley.*

If you would like to adopt a library, *send your contribution to: WER Library Fund, 27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA 94965.*

If you are a librarian *who would like a gift subscription for your library, send your request to Susan Erkel Ryan at the above address.*

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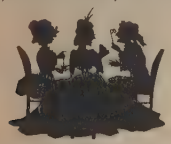

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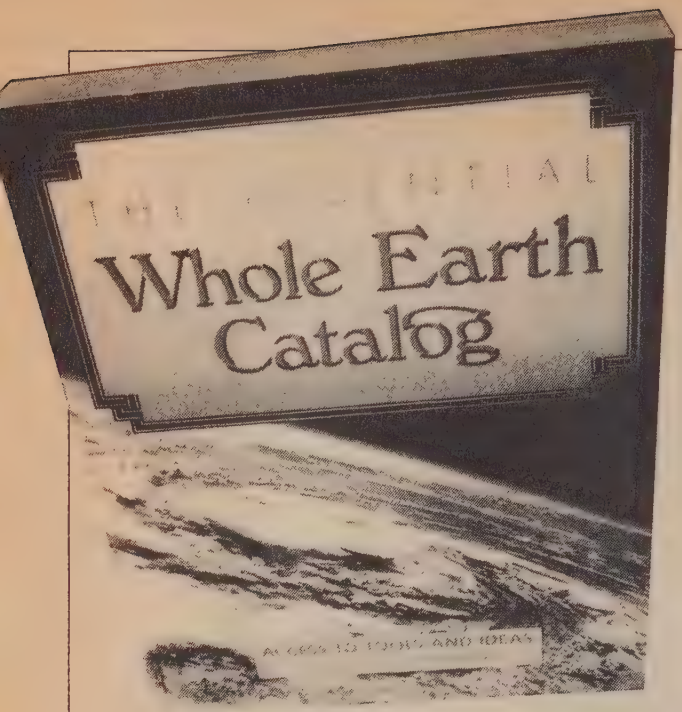

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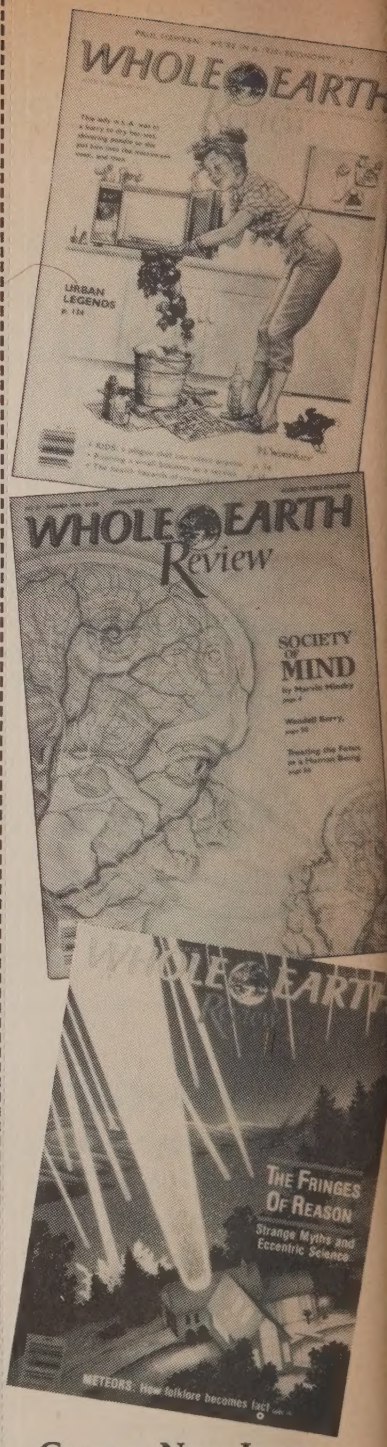

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Lani Irwin paints toys, paper cranes, playing cards, and mannequins, and comes up with some strange and wonderful images in the process. "I like paintings that are not easily understood," she says. "I like ambiguity."